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Magazine

Weekend

THE INDEPENDENT

3,055

SATURDAY 3 AUGUST 1996

WARM and sunny with patchy cloud

50p (in 45p)

A world of anguish in an inch of glass

Three women were yesterday granted last-minute injunctions to prevent their frozen embryos being destroyed, as fertility experts and campaigners warned that hundreds of couples would be unable to save much-wanted embryos because of the failure of "shoddy" blanket legislation.

The reprieve began when one woman, whose estranged husband had refused to sign a form consenting to an extension of the storage period, managed to obtain an injunction preventing the immediate destruction of her fertilised eggs.

At least two other women were thought to have obtained similar injunctions yesterday. As the news emerged, lawyers faxed fertility clinics warning

them that they had found a loophole in the law which imposes a five-year storage limit.

"In our view for clinics to now destroy the embryos, believing they did not have consent, would expose them and the HFEA [Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority] to legal liability," said the fax from Graham Ross, representing the first woman to obtain an injunction.

Lawyers argue that embryos created with donor sperm could be kept indefinitely if sperm was given before the five-year storage limit was imposed.

Experts say the "shoddy put together" law has failed to account for the extent of egg and semen donation and the problems in tracing couples

'Blanket' legislation that is causing despair

Experts warn that the "blanket" legislation surrounding the destruction of thousands of frozen embryos fails to take into account the complex issues surrounding their creation.

The first wave of embryo disposal has highlighted problems such as ownership, the disposal of wanted embryos because of failures in tracing original "parents", the disposal of sibling embryos and the ethics involved when both the genetic and adoptive parents may be entirely separate - problems which experts say must be urgently addressed if the destruction is to continue. JOJO MOYES reports

overseas. Due to the requirement for the express consent of both "parents", they predict increasing problems as the destruction of embryos becomes a regular event.

The move has added to the distress of doctors, who presided over the destruction of

more than 3,300 "orphaned" embryos.

Dr Peter Brinsden, of Bourn Hall Clinic, Cambridge, where as many as 900 embryos have been destroyed, said he wished the loopholes had been found two weeks ago.

"I am certain in my mind that

we have complied with the law, but naturally I am devastated. Indeed all the staff are very distressed.

"They have worked hard to create embryos, and have had to destroy them. Now we are getting people saying that maybe we shouldn't have

allowed them to perish," Dr Brinsden said.

Yesterday morning he received a faxed letter from a couple living overseas asking him to extend the storage period of their embryos another five years. But the letter arrived 24 hours too late.

Dr Brinsden revealed he had retained six embryos. One belonged to a woman threatening legal action, while the "parents" of the remainder had told him consent forms - permitting extended storage - were in the post.

Dr Peter Bromwich of the Midlands Fertility Service, where 90 embryos had been destroyed, said he was extremely sad that the fax had arrived too late. But he said he was stuck between the threat of legal action from parents and immense pressure from the HFEA.

He added that he had been told he faced prison if he did not fulfil his legal obligations in destroying the embryos, and that a representative would come to the clinic and do it

anyway. "This act is flawed and is so shoddily put together that it had to go back to Parliament a year later. But it's still not right."

Dr Bromwich said clinics were hampered by both time and legal restraints in finding couples where both partners had been involved in the creation of much-wanted embryos.

In many cases they were not allowed to trace the couple if it would "identify" them to a third party.

And according to Professor John Scarisbrick, chairman to trustees of the "pro-life" organisation, Life, the use of false names by sperm donors and the practice of anonymity meant that it was often impossible to trace the men.

The couples

Couples who fall out: who gets custody?

On Thursday night a childless woman obtained a High Court injunction to prevent the destruction of her frozen embryo. The unnamed woman's estranged husband had refused to sign a form consenting to an extension of the storage period.

According to her solicitor, she believes this is her only chance to have children, but the husband has not consented so far.

He may have withheld consent because he does not wish to pay maintenance, or he may eventually be planning to have another family with a future partner.

What happens to embryos if one partner dies?

In these cases, it appears the embryos may be useless. Dr Robert Forman, clinical director of the London Gynaecology and Fertility Centre yesterday

day told of a couple under treatment where the wife recently died. The husband wished to donate the embryos but was told he was not allowed to because the wife was "not available" to give her consent.

Constraints on finding patients: how will they know?

One couple who had treatment were transferred to the US with the air force. The clinic was not allowed to approach the air force to ask for the new address as it would have identified them. The couple do not know the embryos will be destroyed.

In another example, a clinic had lost touch with another long-term patient after she moved. The woman's GP contacted the fertility consultant on numerous occasions for advice on the patient, but he was not allowed to ask the GP for the patient's new address, or even ask him to forward a letter to her because it would have "identified" her.

The siblings

The siblings: how to keep them together

Mrs A donated her "spare" embryos - created with donor sperm - after completing her own family with twins. As a result of the donation, yesterday morning Mrs B was confirmed as pregnant.

She would desperately like to have the spare sibling embryos. "But she [Mrs B] will not have any siblings related to her first child because we cannot trace the sperm donor, and those embryos are scheduled for destruction in May next year," her consultant said.

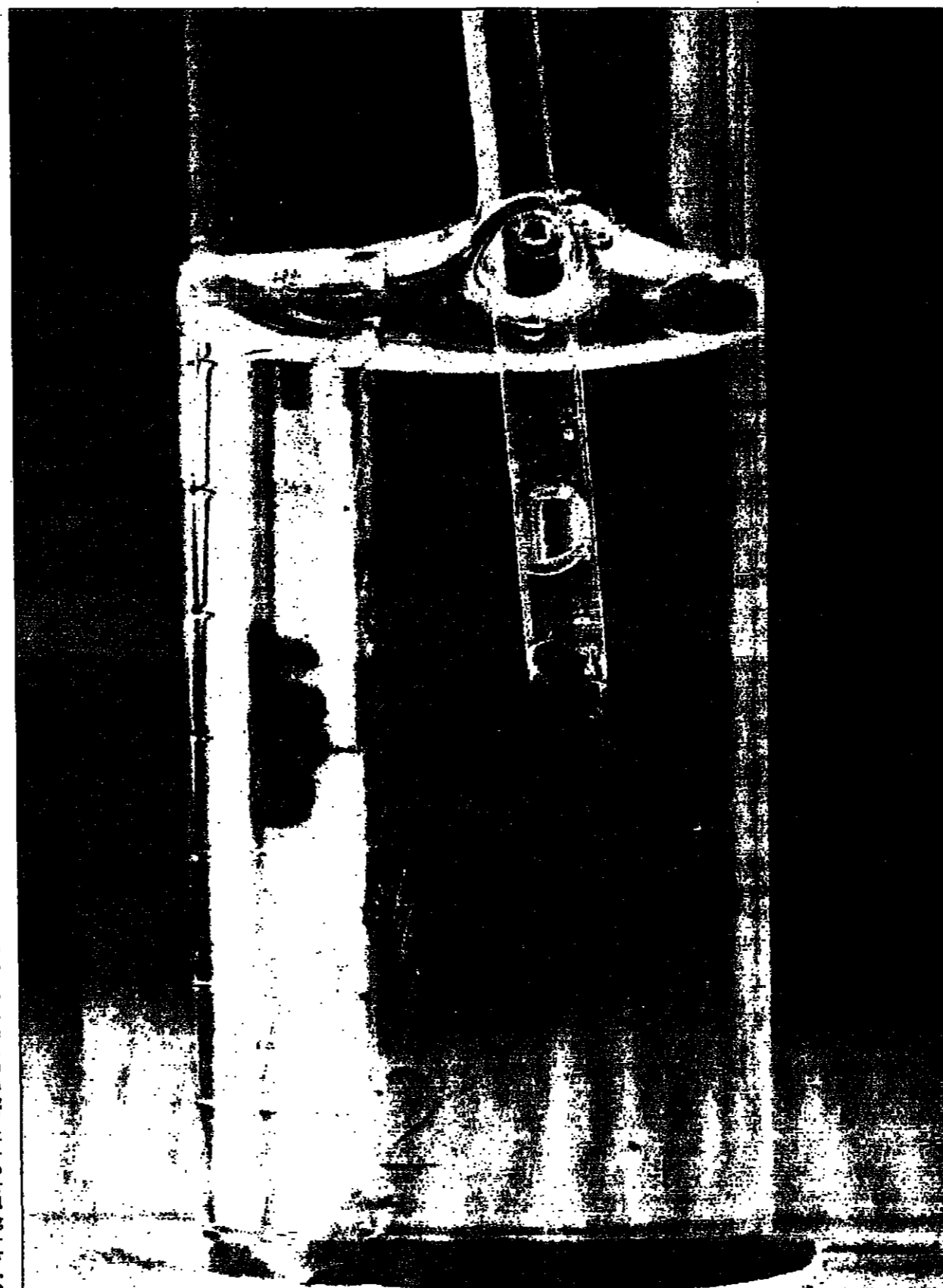
Rather than "waste" Mrs A's embryos, they will be used for another, unrelated couple - with the result that brothers and sisters could be brought up in three or more different families. Depending on the length of time that embryos have been stored, it is also possible that the siblings could be born as much as 20 years apart.

The adoption of embryos: how to keep them apart

In an attempt to stop "orphan embryos" from being destroyed, Life was among the organisations which offered to "adopt" them. To an extent, with the distribution of donated embryos between families (see left) this already takes place.

Julia Cole, spokesperson for the marriage guidance organisation, Relate, believes that the practice raises serious issues. "For a start," she said, "how do you stop [people] grown from sibling embryos, from growing up and marrying each other?"

New research showed that clients requiring the most counselling were often those who were not brought up by their original parents. "How would you feel, growing up knowing you were adopted as a four-to-six-week-old because your parents no longer wanted you, and you were about to be destroyed?"



Moment of death: A glass straw containing an embryo is lowered into fixative solution. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Ned Kelly rides again in £42m battle

ROBERT MILLIKEN
Sydney

Ned Kelly would probably be amused. The infamous 19th-century Australian bush-anger, or outlaw, has reached beyond his grave to spark a court battle in which descendants of six Aboriginal trackers are claiming £42m over their antecedents' roles in Kelly's capture.

The money represents accumulated interest and damages over the sum of £30 to which the trackers were entitled from the £8,000 reward for Kelly's capture in 1880, but which their relatives claim they never received.

"This is about justice and reconciliation," said John Lee Jones, 64, a distant relation of the trackers, who has launched a writ against the state governments of Victoria and Queens-



Ned Kelly: Tracked down in 1880. Illustration: Sidney Nolan

land in the Queensland Supreme Court. Mr Jones comes from Fraser Island, off the Queensland coast, where Victoria's authorities recruited Aboriginal trackers to help them hunt down Kelly and his

gang as they shot, looted and robbed their way across the state in the late 1870s.

Victoria's own Aboriginal trackers, it seems, were too sympathetic to the Kelly gang, and led the police in circles.

The court case has assumed something of the spirit of Ned Kelly, who remains an Australian folk hero over his resourcefulness and refusal to be howled by authority.

Covered from head to toe in 100lb of armour, Kelly made his last stand at Glenrowan, Victoria, in June 1880, and was hanged in Melbourne five months later.

"Give me a short life and a happy one," he is reputed to have said on the gallows. His life inspired Australia's first feature film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, in 1906, and an ill-fated

version starring Mick Jagger as Ned in 1970.

Mr Jones has filed the claim on behalf of the descendants of Jack Noble and Gary Owens, two of the original trackers who, the families say, died in poverty after never being paid the promised £50 for their part in Kelly's capture. One relative, May McBride, 80, remembers her mother complaining constantly about the money.

Mr Jones says he has documentary evidence to prove that the money was not paid. If his claim succeeds, the money will be paid into a trust for education, housing and health care for the trackers' descendants. Did he think £42m was excessive? "No. The government still has a duty of trust to living Aboriginals. And our economy is based on the discharge of debt."

QUICKLY

Labour hits back

Labour launched a summer campaign against "Tory lies" yesterday, claiming to have learnt the lesson of allowing Conservative propaganda to go unchallenged in the 1992 election campaign. Page 2

BSE slaughter

Up to 30,000 more cattle may have to be slaughtered to eradicate "mad cow" disease in the UK, after the announcement that it can be inherited by calves born to animals with the disease. Page 5

Bishop assassinated

France reacted with outrage to the assassination of one of Algeria's leading Catholic churchmen, Bishop Pierre Claverie, in a bomb attack in Oran, but insisted that the two countries had to continue recently-resumed political dialogue. Page 7

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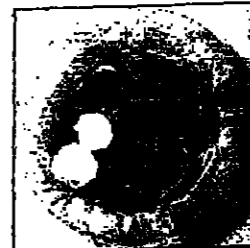
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THE INDEPENDENT on Monday

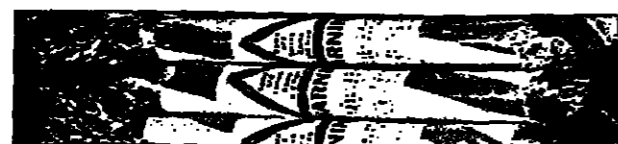
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Labour takes to beaches to rock the vote



JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

John Prescott, the deputy Labour leader, launched a summer holiday campaign against "Tory lies" yesterday, claiming to have learnt the lesson of allowing Conservative propaganda to go unchallenged in the 1992 election campaign.

To the refrain of "Sweet-talking lies" by the Chiffons and "Unbelievable" by EMF, Mr Prescott pledged at a Westminster news conference to patrol the beaches bothering holidaymakers: "I'll be checking whether they're reading Jeffrey Archer or our pledge card," he said.

Party supporters from Blackpool to Benidorm are being issued with posters, beach hats, mini fridges, plastic sunglasses and cards bearing Labour's five early pledges, and sticks of rock with the words "TORY LIES" running through them.

The Benidorm edition of yesterday's *Sun* (225 pence), now printed in Spain and the Canaries, carried a full-page Labour advertisement headed: "Do you speak Tory?" It listed nine "useful translations for those travelling to the United Kingdom" of "Tory phrases", including "No tax increases", which Labour says means "22 new taxes since 1992".

The jocular style belies Labour's alarm at opinion research suggesting that the Tory campaign, "New Labour, New Danger", was biting home. Yesterday's news conference was attended by Chris Powell, head of the BMP advertising agency. He is believed to be behind Labour's riposte. "Same old Tories, same old lies".

A MORI poll yesterday showed the Tories had retaken the lead as the best party on

"law and order" and (by one point) "managing the economy" - although Labour still leads on eight of the top 10 issues.

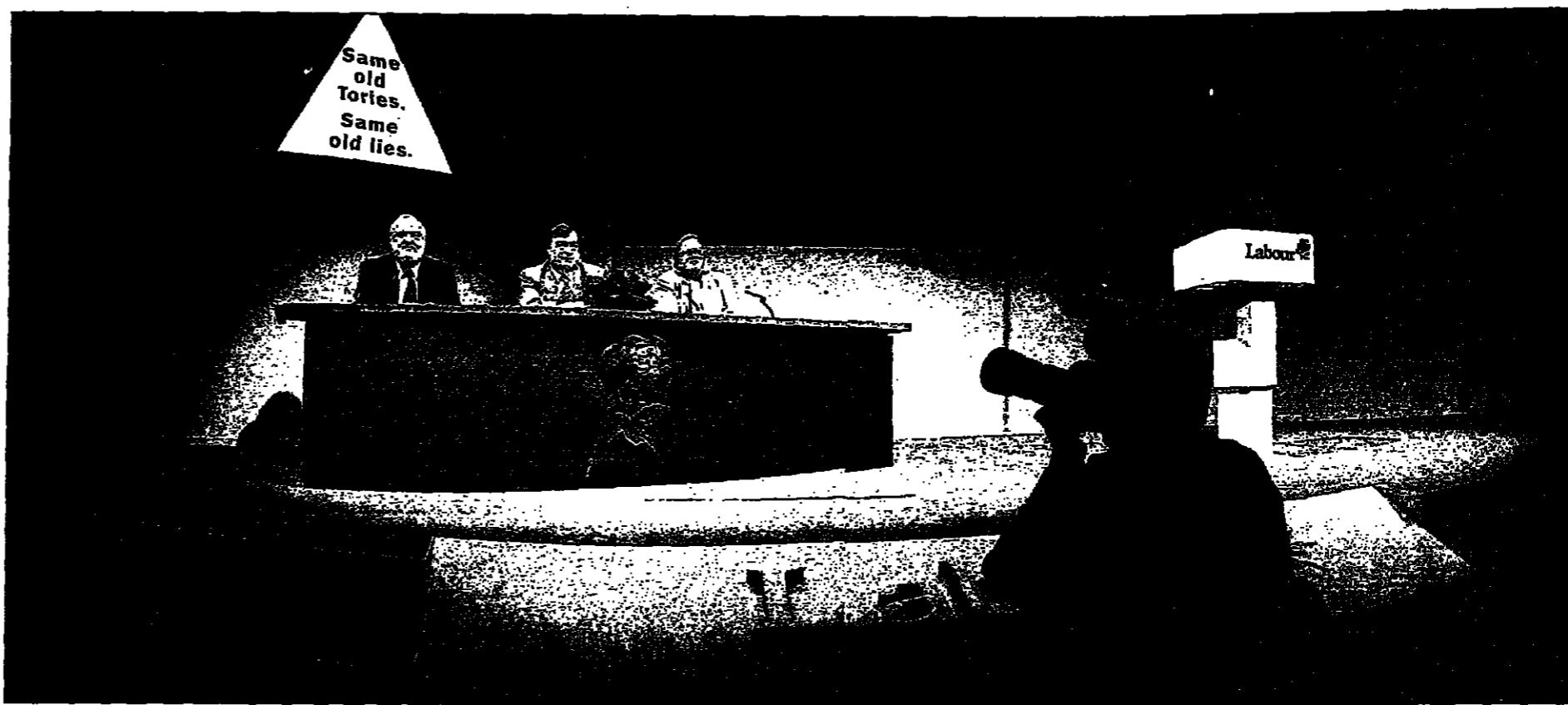
Frank Dobson, Labour's environment spokesman, said the party had failed to respond effectively to Saatchi & Saatchi's campaign in the run-up to the 1992 election, warning of a Labour "tax bombshell". He said: "We thought their lying was so blatant we could ignore it. We believed the news media and the public would recognise that the Tories were lying about Labour's plans."

Charles Hendry, Tory party vice-chairman, dismissed the £500,000 campaign: "People go to Spain for sun, sea and sangria, not socialism."

The Tories have dropped a plan to place posters at holiday airports reminding people they are returning to a country with one of the lowest unemployment levels, and enjoying low mortgage and interest rates.

Even on the issues contested by Labour's campaign, the facts of the argument were hardly at the centre of the debate. Labour's poster lists five "Tory lies": that Labour will be soft on criminals, will increase taxes, put up interest rates and mortgages, give up the national veto in Europe and that the minimum wage will cost jobs.

But the "truth" about Labour policy is generally unambiguous: that Labour will "seek tough sentences for violent crimes and the swift punishment of persistent young offenders", will "aim to reduce taxes for ordinary people", will "keep interest rates and inflation as low as possible" and will "keep the veto". The poster also says: "New Labour will set a realistic minimum wage that protects jobs, having consulted with businesses and employees."



Red alert: John Prescott at yesterday's launch of Labour's campaign against "Tory lies". Beach hats and sticks of rock will be given to beach-goers Photograph: Adrian Cook

Summertime blues

Just when you thought it was safe... or why politicians can never take a break

August 1990: Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait
August 1991: Coup attempt against Mikhail Gorbachev
August 1992: Sterling crisis forced John Major to return early from Spanish holiday
August 1993: Tory turmoil after leak of Prime Minister's comments about "bastards"
August 1994: IRA ceasefire
August 1995: Tony Blair hit by first wave of real dissent, including Roy Hattersley accusing him of ignoring the poor

For a couple of weeks this summer, John Prescott is in charge of the Labour Party, as Tony Blair heads off today to Italy and France for his summer holiday. But who would be running the show if there were a Labour government - and would he be a "heartbeat away from power"?

The answer to the first question is that, although Mr Prescott would still be deputy leader, so far Mr Blair has refused to say that he would be Deputy Prime Minister - despite the fact that he shadows Michael Heseltine, for whom the title was revived last year.

The *Independent* understands

John Rentoul reports on the deputy leader's likely role

that Mr Blair has promised Mr Prescott the title First Secretary, an office held by George Brown and Barbara Castle in Harold Wilson's first administration. The assumption must be that Mr Prescott would deputise for Prime Minister Blair in the Commons.

But Mr Prescott would not automatically become Prime Minister if, in the delicate language of the Labour Party constitution, Mr Blair became "permanently unavailable".

A rule change made at the 1993 Labour conference says

that, in government, the Cabinet must choose one of its number to be Acting Prime Minister until a new leader is elected. On the basis of the present Shadow Cabinet, that would seem to be a close race between Chancellor Gordon Brown and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

Labour governments have not had a Deputy Prime Minister since the title was held by Herbert Morrison in 1945-51.

But Harold Wilson had a First Secretary, throughout his 1964-70 government, who ranked second in the ministerial pecking order. The title was invented, after the "night of the long knives" in 1962, for RA Butler - who also combined it with Deputy Prime Minister.

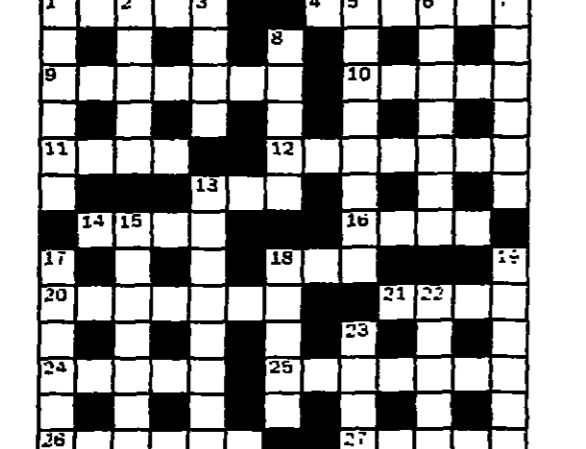
It is believed that Mr Blair has not yet made a decision about Mr Prescott's departmental responsibilities if Labour wins the next election. Press reports

that he might be made Home Secretary are met with standard dismissals of "pure speculation" from Labour officials.

Some Labour MPs assume the Home Office is regarded as a "safe" job which would keep him occupied, and well away from shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown's economic responsibilities. It also has the advantage, according to one observer, that Mr Blair, as a former shadow Home Secretary, would be able to keep an informed eye on him.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No. 3058 Saturday 3 August By: S. S. S.

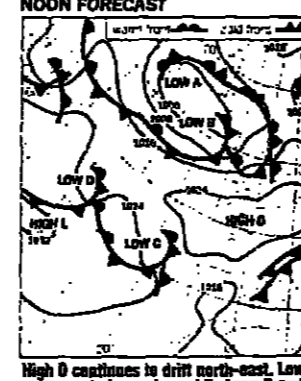


- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Animal (5) | 1 Part of gun (6) |
| 4 Going wrong (6) | 2 Greek letter (5) |
| 9 Copy (7) | 3 Caudal appendage (4) |
| 10 Austrian psychiatrist (5) | 5 Chemical process (7) |
| 11 Style (4) | 6 Unlawful (7) |
| 12 Of the eye (7) | 7 Distort (6) |
| 13 Sake item (3) | 8 Lace frill (5) |
| 14 Mountain lion (4) | 13 Worker (8) |
| 16 Cereal (4) | 15 Stringed instrument (7) |
| 17 Marsh (3) | 16 Holder for shell (3-3) |
| 20 Natural sugar (7) | 18 High temperature (5) |
| 21 White wine (4) | 19 Boring tool (6) |
| 24 Lucid (5) | 22 Philosophical disciple of Zeno (5) |
| 25 Entangle (7) | 23 Comply with (4) |
| 26 Verses (6) | |
| 27 Sailing vessel (5) | |

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1. Alibi, 8. Commit, 10. Halcyon, 11. Terror, 12. Quirk, 13. Fugl, 14. Eerie, 15. Gamma, 16. Four, 17. Drunk, 18. Tumult, 19. Egoism, 20. Sliver, 21. Down, 22. Masoch, 23. Blame, 24. Conspire, 25. Ambition, 26. Suite, 27. Promenade, 28. Lark, 29. Recruit, 30. Truncated, 31. Auster, 32. Taboo, 33. Angle.

Weather forecast

NOON FORECAST



High 0 continues to drift north-east, low 0 is moving slowly north-east, deepening, with rain 0 and 0 rain clearly seen.

WORLD WEATHER

London	14-16	Backstop	14-16	Colchester
Birmingham	14-16	Thames	14-16	Cardiff
Manchester	14-16	Avon	14-16	Exeter
Edinburgh	14-16	Mersey	14-16	Bristol
Glasgow	14-16	Irish	14-16	Cardiff
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Scientists have tasted the future – it's a red gooseberry, a pineapple-flavoured strawberry, and a green-pea steak

KATE WATSON-SMYTH

On a London street a builder stood idly peeling an orange and enjoying his lunch, little knowing that inside the building behind him, a group of scientists were planning a fruit revolution.

These men have seen the future and it involves an orgy of fruit all year round. No longer will it be impossible, or ruinously expensive, to eat English strawberries at Christmas, or Kentish apples at Easter.

Supermarkets will be able to manipulate our jaded palates into eating fruit at the "wrong time of year", simply because it is there.

And we will want to.

Modern intensive farming methods have increased the shelf-life of the fruit we eat, but it has been at the expense of the taste of the fruit, producing delicious-looking food which is disappointingly bland. Now, scientists are trying to put back the flavours of yesteryear, and return us to the golden age of the apple and the succulent strawberry.

The fresh-fruit market in Britain is worth £2.2bn annually, of which 72 per cent is spent in supermarkets. That is the equivalent of £95 per household, or £40 per head.

A team at the government-funded Horticulture Research Institute (HRI) believes that by increasing the flavour and shelf-life of British fruit there will no longer be any need to import vast quantities from overseas. Last year Britons spent £190m on imported apples, with £80m on French apples alone.

Dr David Simpson, a strawberry breeder at HRI, in East Malling, Kent, believes that nature simply needs a helping hand to cope with our constant craving for better and more interesting food.

"The reason that strawberries no longer taste good is because breeders have had to concentrate on increasing shelf-life, which meant using lots of chemicals and led to a loss of taste," he said.

"We have now found a way round that, and have bred the Bolero strawberry, which will grow right up until late Octo-

ber and still have the juiciness and flavour of a proper strawberry," he said.

Dr Simpson has also created a white strawberry but this is unlikely to be a commercial success as growers were unable to tell when it was ripe enough to pick. It also tasted of pineapple.

All this has been achieved by extensive crossbreeding and careful refining. Elsewhere at East Malling they have gone one step further and are using genetic modification to increase different fruits' resistance to disease as well as to improve flavour and prolong shelf-life.

Professor David James, who heads the Fruit Biotechnology group at HRI, said his team had identified genes which control the ripening process in apples, and had begun trials on the Queen Cox variety.

"We are hoping that the genes will programme the apple to dramatically reduce its production of ethylene, which is responsible for the ripening process," he said. "By inserting these [genes], we should be able to slow down the ripening process and extend the apple's shelf-life without losing flavour."

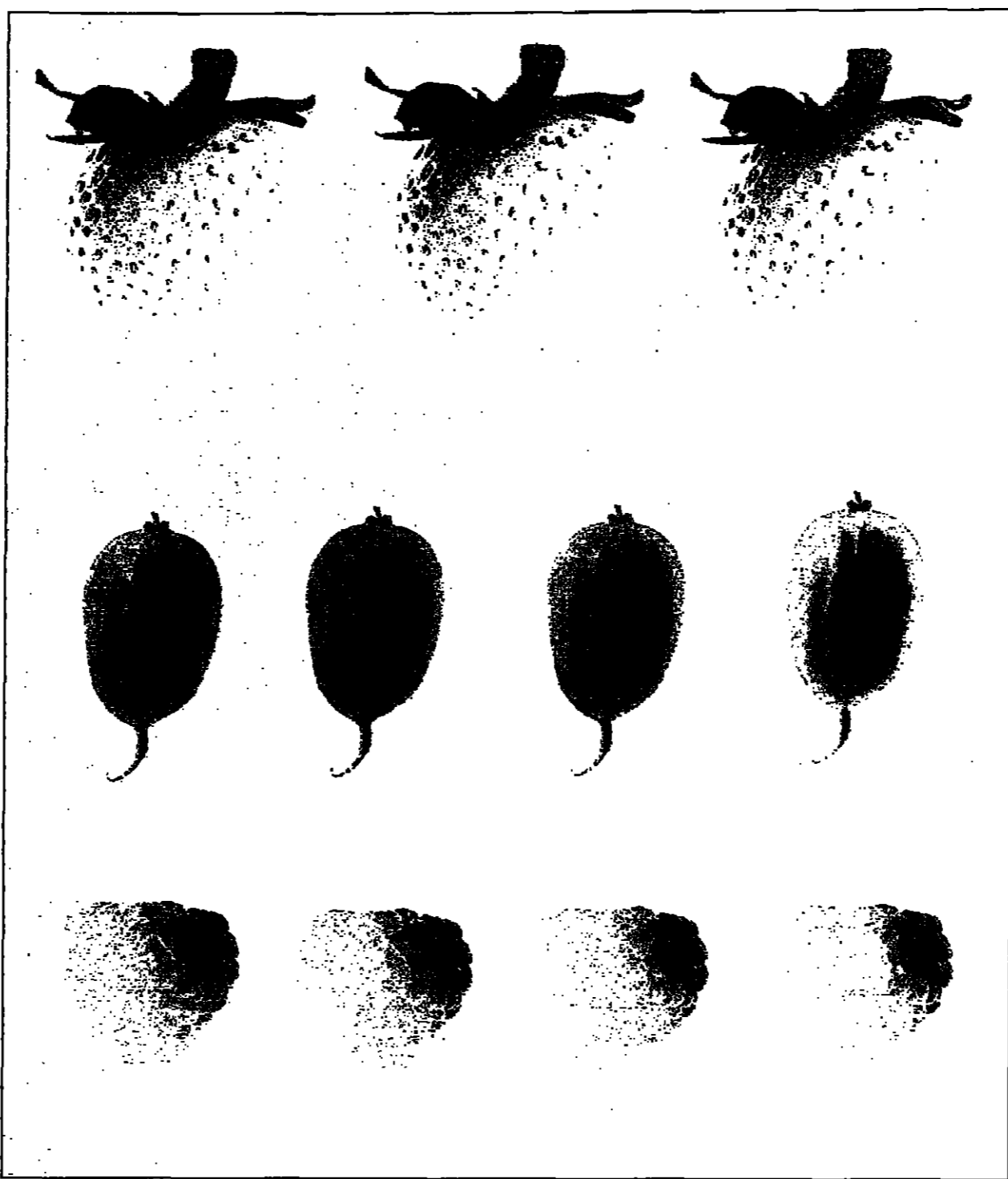
This process has already proved successful in cantaloupe melons and tomatoes, and trials will be completed in the next two or three years.

Genetic modification does not end with the improvement of fruits as we are used to seeing them. It has also been used to reinvent the gooseberry.

For many years this green, hard and spiny fruit has had an image problem, and has been relegated mainly to the canning industry. Enter the red gooseberry, set to be the fruit of the 21st century. Fat, sweet and smooth-skinned, it practically begs for Delia Smith to give it the cranberry treatment.

Nor is it just fruit that is being manipulated. At Lucas Ingredients, scientists have spent five years extracting protein from everything from grass to lupins in their search for a new meat substitute.

They settled on the humble pea, and the meat-substitute, which combines pea protein and wheat gluten, will appear in supermarkets in the autumn.



The product, called Arrum, is aimed at a fast-growing market. The recent food scares and the desire for healthy eating have prompted nearly 50 per cent of Britons to cut back on their meat consumption. The UK market for vegetarian foods has grown by 83 per cent in the past five years, to £388m.

David Baines, technical director of Lucas Ingredients, part of the Dalgety food group,

said pea protein was "very palatable." It can be flavoured to taste like meat, and can also be made to look like meat with the addition of colourings.

For the moment, most of this work is at the trial stage. But perhaps, in the future, scientists will be able to create our real dream foods – bananas that never turn black, and strawberries that come ready-dipped in chocolate.

Seasons stretch to fill the shelves

There is a body of opinion that believes that shops should respect the home-grown season for produce like asparagus and strawberries by not stocking them out of season. While it is an understandable sentiment, it is not realistic. Year-round availability is here to stay.

And this is where horticulture can play a positive role. If the choice is between a new variety of vegetable developed to be grown at home out of season, and some highly durable variety grown in Latin America or Africa where controls are not as stringent as they are in Britain, at that point I am in favour of extending the home-grown season.

In fact the seasons are changing so fast year on year with the development of new varieties and new farming methods that it is difficult to say with any confidence exactly when they fall for any given fruit or vegetable. It has become accepted that there is an early, a mid and a late season for most crops, and more recently I have heard the term extra-late.

The point at which ex-

tending the seasons becomes distasteful is if there is a reliance on unnatural methods of production, artificial daylight, or on chemicals. There is nothing wrong with glasshouse production, we have been practising it for hundreds of years. It is the extremes that are questionable.

Likewise we have been cross-breeding crops to produce certain features for a long time, and there is no reason why a new variety should not be good, or even better, than an existing one. It is when the breeding is purely for yield or speed of production and there is no consideration of quality that it becomes negative.

The real danger lies with transgenic varieties, those that have been created by moving DNA from one organism to another. It is difficult to see anything good about tampering with nature in this fashion. But to see all new strains in a negative light simply because they will supersede old varieties or change the status quo is to deny the existence of progress.

Annie Bell
Food writer



Asparagus: Quality versus quantity of produce

Brussels out to slice the British loaf

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

Labour presented itself yesterday as the defender of a 700-year-old British law against the encroachment of Brussels as it launched a campaign to "save the British loaf".

Ever since King John enacted the Assize of Bread in 1266, the weight of loaves in England has been regulated. But now,

warns Nigel Griffiths, Labour consumer spokesman, a draft European Union directive threatens the standard loaf. "In the UK we buy bread by the loaf. Consumers are protected because whatever the shape or size of the loaf, they get the same weight of bread by law – 800g in the case of a standard family loaf; which represents 85 per cent of all bread sales," he said. The standard loaf was halved

from the 4lb "quarten" to 2lbs as a wartime measure in 1939, and metricated to 800g in the 1988 Weights and Measures Order. All British bread described as a loaf must be made in either full 800g or half 400g sizes, unless it is below 300g.

But the EC regards this law as a barrier to trade, and wants it scrapped. A directive to be considered by the European Parliament would allow loaves

of any weight to be sold, and labelled in "pence per gram".

As Labour pledges its opposition, however, the affair has seen a bizarre reversal of usual political alignments, with the Government's "deregulation taskforce" at the Department of Trade and Industry keen to get rid of the old laws – "just because they are rules", said Tony Casdagli, director of the Federation of Bakers.

Turkish gang jailed for heroin smuggling

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

One of Britain's major heroin smugglers was jailed for 30 years yesterday in an operation by Customs and Excise investigators which revealed the growing menace of Turkish drug barons.

Two other Turkish Kurds also received long sentences along with a Czech driver, who used a pensioner's tour bus to ship 50kg consignments of heroin into London.

Customs officers believe millions of pounds worth of heroin was smuggled into Britain and sold before the gang was caught with 198kg of the narcotic. The seizure last September, which had an estimated street value of up to £60m, was the second-largest haul in Britain.

The operation provided further evidence of the influence of Turkish drug gangs operating from north London. About 20 are believed to run 80 per cent of the multi-million pound heroin trade. In the past 10 years they have wrested control from Pakistani and Indian traffickers.

Muslum Simsek, 31, who was sentenced at Southwark Crown Court, south London, to 30 years yesterday, is among the top 20 British operators, although his boss has not been caught.

In March customs officers warned that Britain was on the

verge of a heroin epidemic, with seizures of the drug up 80 per cent to a record total in 1995. They recovered 1,118kg of heroin, which is now the most common class A drug.

After the trial customs investigator Steve Hemmley said: "These convictions and sentences represent a significant victory against the Turkish gangs who are responsible for importing so much misery to Britain."

"We know Simsek has been in Britain for 10 years and are convinced that for most, if not all, of this time he has been involved in smuggling in consignments worth hundreds of millions of pounds."

Also jailed was car salesman Ali Akso, 32, of Bouds Green, north London, the only one of the four to plead guilty. The judge described him as a "mid-ranker" in the plot. He was sentenced to 20 years.

Huseyin Kaymak, 34, of Wood Green, north London, who was also convicted of the conspiracy, was a "courier-cum-errand boy". He was jailed for 24 years.

Coach driver Tomas Honz, 27, from Liberec, in the Czech Republic, who had also unsuccessfully denied the conspiracy charge, received 26 years.

MICHAEL STREETER

An outlawed loyalist paramilitary group yesterday disbanded a unit linked to the murder of a Catholic taxi-driver. The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) said it was acting against the Portadown unit of its Mid-Ulster brigade, widely seen in loyalist paramilitary circles as a loose cannon.

The unit, led by a man known as "King Rat", has been linked with the death of Michael McGoldrick, a part-time taxi-driver and student found shot dead near Lurgan, Co Antrim on 7 July. The murder, at the beginning of the Drumcree siege, fuelled nationalist anger at the Orange Order and Unionists during the following week of rioting. At the time, loyalist paramilitary groups denied responsibility, though a number of men in Portadown with links to the UVF were arrested by the RUC. They were later released without charge.

The UVF move will be seen as reinforcing the loyalists' desire to hold their ceasefire, despite the end of the IRA truce. A section of the Mid-Ulster brigade reportedly issued a statement condemning the line of David Ervine, spokesman for the Progressive Unionist Party, which has close links with the paramilitary group. The statement said he was too close to

the nationalist position during the multi-party peace talks at Stormont.

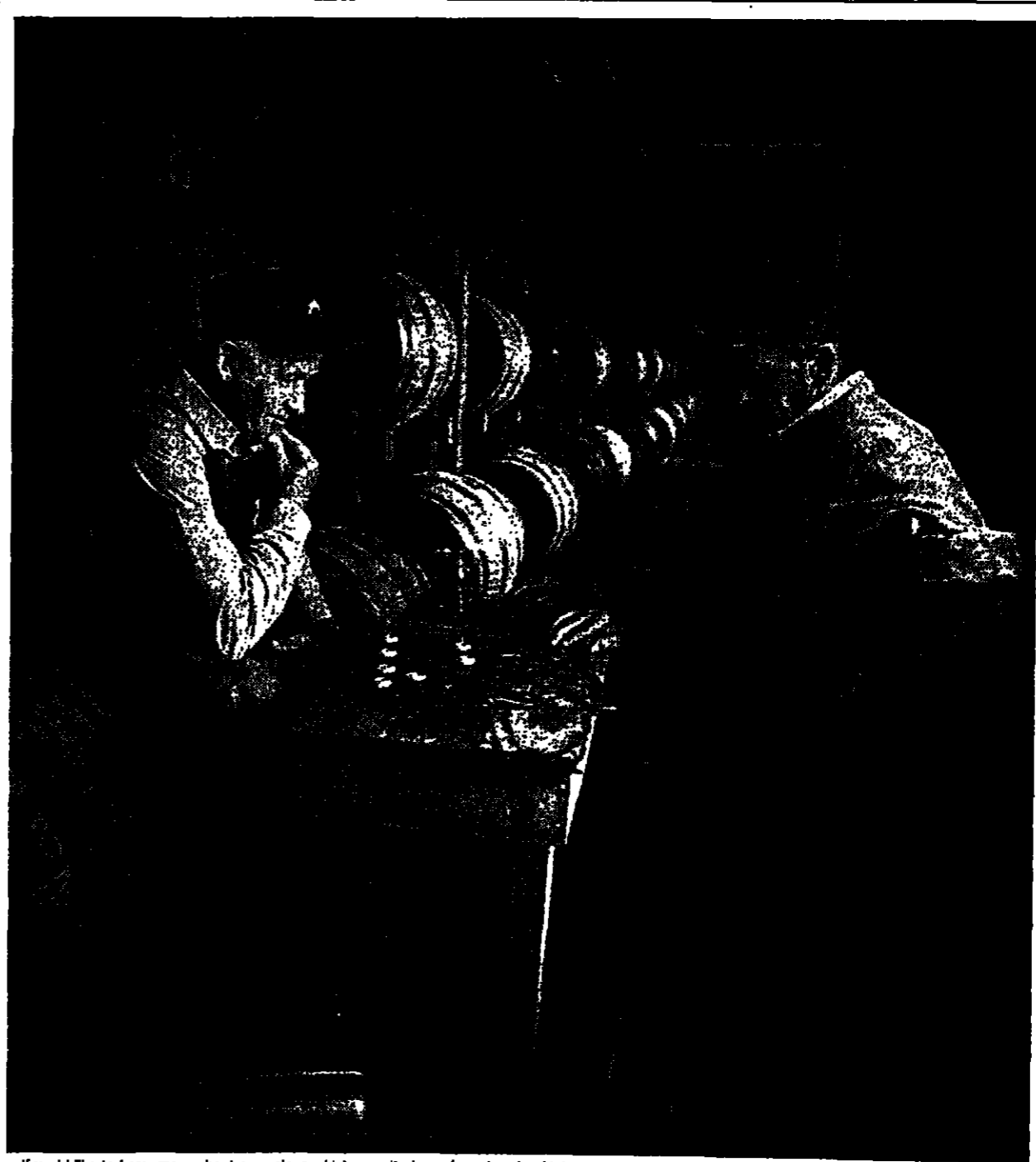
Though yesterday's move does not mean the UVF has renounced violence, it is clear it will not be forced back into armed conflict by an increasingly uncontrolled section, which has recently been urging terrorist strikes aimed at Dublin.

Earlier this week the PUP and UVF hierarchy were reassured when the Stormont talks adjourned without agreeing on early discussions on decommissioning terrorist weapons, a move which the loyalists claim would hamper them against the threat of the IRA.

John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, appealed to Londonderry's nationalist community to recognise the traditional importance of next week's Protestant Apprentice Boys' parade through the city.

He said he understood the talks about a route for the 10 August march were going "comparatively well". "The siege of Derry has an important significance in the mind of the unionist community and represents an expression of their distinctive identity in Ireland. It is very important that that should be recognised by the majority community in Derry, who are the nationalist community," he said.

UVF disbands unit linked to taxi murder



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Schools to test five-year-olds on three Rs

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Five-year-olds will be assessed on their knowledge of the three Rs when they start school, under a new system designed to help compile league tables of primary schools, it emerged yesterday.

The plans, due to be announced in the autumn, will not involve formal testing. Instead, teachers will mark their pupils against a check-list of what they do. For example, they will assess whether a child can look at a book and tell the story from memory, recognise letters or words, or read simple texts. They will also examine whether pupils starting school can write their own names, order objects by size, or count objects accurately.

The "baseline assessment" could be used to compile league tables which would measure not only how each school's pupils did against the national average in tests at seven, 11 and 14 but also how far they had progressed.

There have been criticisms that raw test results do not take

into account social differences and the tendency for children in middle-class areas to be much more advanced when they start school than those in deprived areas.

All children would take part in the scheme from September, 1998. At present, about half of all local authorities have some kind of tests at five to check on how advanced children are when they start school. These might have to be adapted to fit in with the new national scheme.

The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA), will consult teachers in the autumn on its plans. Legislation will be needed before the changes can be implemented, and this would not take place until after the next general election. The Labour Party has been committed to the principle of testing children at five for some time and would be keen to implement the plans, along with a system of improvement targets for all schools.

Gillian Shepherd, the Secretary of State for Education, asked SCAA in January to develop proposals for baseline

assessment. In September the authority will publish three different models, all of which will give each child a numerical score. The models will be piloted during a consultation period later in the year.

A spokesman for SCAA said its aim was to work out a nationally consistent way of assessing what children can do when they enter primary education.

"First of all this is so there is a possibility of working out some measure of the value added by a school between entry and the key stage one tests when children are seven."

"Second, it is to support teachers in assessing where children are and what teaching they will need in the first two years of schooling," he said.

The proposals will anger some teachers who believe the assessments will not measure children's abilities accurately enough to be used for league tables. However, others will prefer the idea of value-added league tables to raw test results, saying that they will make some allowance for social differences.

Baseline assessment: a draft checklist

Reading. Can the child...

- ☐ Hold a book appropriately, turn the pages and retell a story from memory?
- ☐ Repeat some words of the text from memory?
- ☐ Recognise letters by shape and sound?
- ☐ Read familiar words in a range of contexts?
- ☐ Read simple texts?

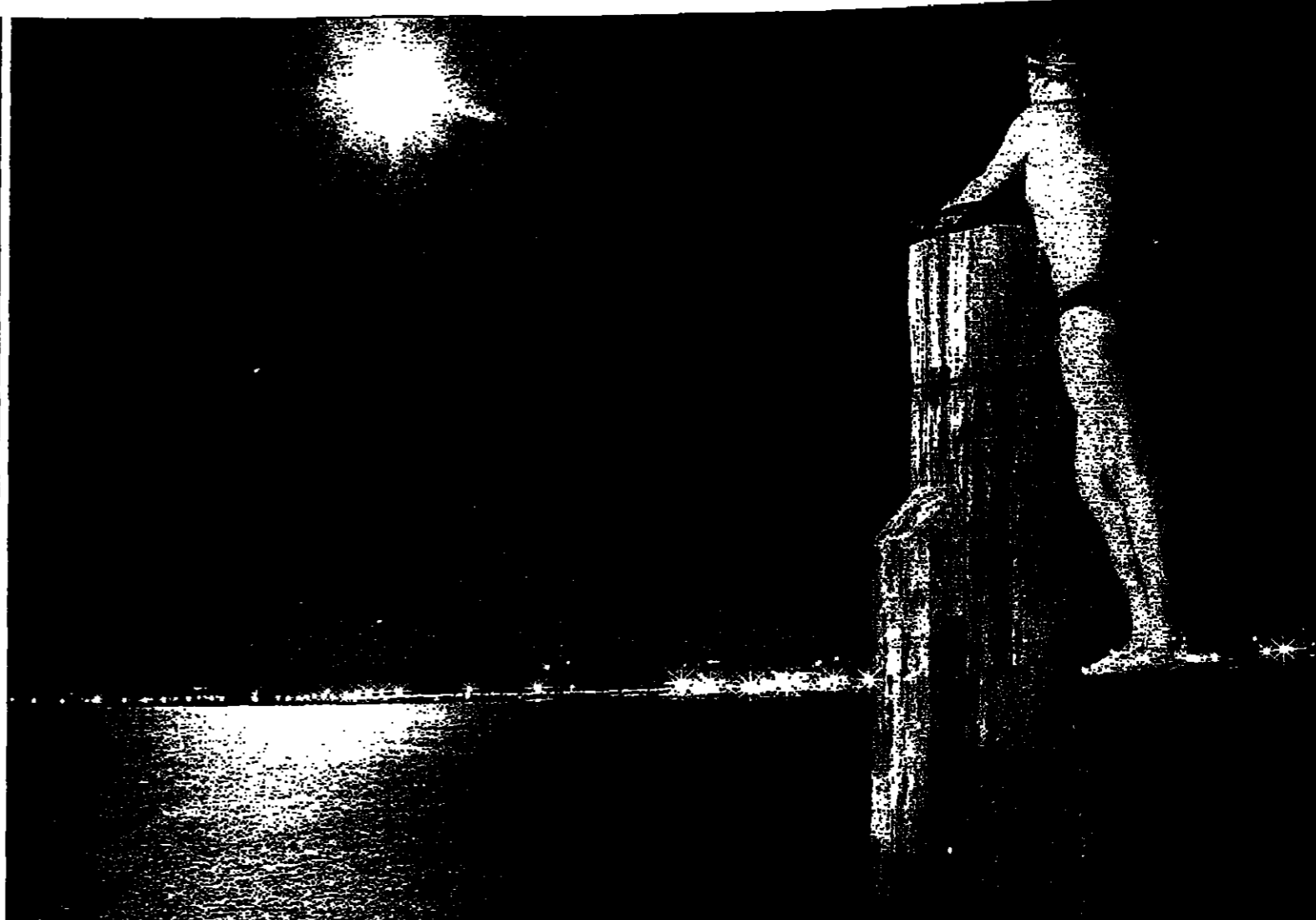
Writing. Can he or she...

- ☐ Write symbols and letters?
- ☐ Write his or her own name using upper and lower case letters correctly?



Mathematics. Can the child...

- ☐ Hear word sounds and write corresponding letters in sequence?
- ☐ Attempt to write sentences?
- ☐ Attempt to spell unfamiliar words?
- ☐ Create patterns?
- ☐ Order objects by size?
- ☐ Match similar objects to one another?
- ☐ Identify sequences?
- ☐ Count objects accurately?
- ☐ Recognise numbers?
- ☐ Add and subtract using objects?
- ☐ Solve numerical problems using addition and subtraction?



Night in the water: A swimmer on Ryde pier pausing to survey the full moon above the Solent, before setting out to swim round the Isle of Wight. The relay team of staff from Southampton University aimed to cover the 65-mile distance in about 23 hours. Photograph: Paul Knights

EU gives £40m to fight poverty

LOUISE JURY

Some of Britain's most deprived inner-city areas will benefit from a £40m EU package to create more than 2,500 jobs and 8,500 training places, it was announced yesterday.

Liverpool will be the biggest beneficiary, with £11.8m; Glasgow £10.9m, Manchester £6.4m, and Sheffield and Nottingham £5.4m apiece.

The money was welcomed by council leaders for the boost it gives to areas plagued by high unemployment, crime and ill-health. Further grants are in the pipeline to help parts of London, Birmingham and Swansea.

All the schemes were nominated by the Government two years ago, but there have been some delays.

Liverpool council leader Frank Prendergast said he was pleased that problems between the Government and Brussels had been resolved and the money had been released. "This funding will improve security [and] health and provide jobs to combat inner-city deprivation."

On Merseyside, the grant will go towards creating more than 220 jobs and training 1,700 people in the Liverpool Central, north Hulton and Netherton areas. The Liverpool Central programme will focus on improving people's job prospects by improving their health.

Cutting crime is crucial for the strife-torn areas of Hulme and Moss Side in Manchester, which suffer twice the average unemployment rate and 15 times the number of robberies.

In addition to bringing new trade to the area and boosting existing business, the plan is to cut car crime, violent crime and burglaries by 10 per cent.

Richard Leese the council leader, said: "I am delighted at this news... We hope to be able soon to agree with Government and local partners the structures and quality projects we all want to see happen."

In Sheffield, the grant will go towards creating 400 jobs and training 500 people in the north-west inner-city area, where unemployment runs at 32 per cent following steel plant closures.

Renate Smith, the council's Europe information officer, said they were "delighted". She said involving the community was a vital part of the EU

urban programme. "It is a bottom-up approach, empowering communities so people can run their own projects and carry them on when the European money is finished."

In Scotland, 200 jobs and 4,500 training places will be created in Paisley and a further 300 jobs and 500 training places in Glasgow North.

Gordon Macdiarmid, the council's deputy leader, welcomed the assistance. "Glasgow needs this continued support, and increased financial assistance... if it is to make a positive contribution towards alleviating the long-term problems of unemployment and the continuing erosion of its industrial base," he said.

A spokesman for Nottingham city council, where 300 jobs, 800

training places and 500 child care places will be created, said that the money was "extremely welcome".

Most European funding was provided to regions, but the urban programme was focused on much smaller areas. "It allows us to address underlying social and environmental problems that ultimately have a detrimental effect on the local economy," he commented.

A spokeswoman for the European commissioner in charge of regional policy, Monika Wolf-Mathies, said: "Britain is getting quite a good share."

Parts of Naples and Venice in Italy, Lille and Paris in France, Magdeburg in Germany and Dublin and Cork in the Irish Republic are also to benefit under the programme.

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£20,000 - £99,999	6.30	-	5.04	-
£10,000 - £19,999	6.20	-	4.96	-
£5,000 - £9,999	6.00	-	4.80	-
£500 - £4,999	0.30	-	0.40	-
DEPOSIT 120 DAY ACCOUNT**				
(Annual and Monthly Interest)				
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£25,000 - £49,999	3.70	-	2.96	-
£10,000 - £24,999	3.10	-	2.48	-
£5,000 - £9,999	3.00	-	2.40	-
£500 - £4,999	0.50	-	0.40	-
DEPOSIT INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNT**				
(Annual Interest)				
£50,000 or more	2.15	-	1.72	-
£25,000 - £49,999	1.45	-	1.16	-
£10,000 - £24,999	1.00	-	0.80	-
£5,000 - £9,999	0.65	-	0.52	-
£500 - £4,999	0.60	-	0.48	-
£500 - £4,999	0.30	-	0.40	-
DEPOSIT CURRENT ACCOUNT**				
£50,000 or more	2.08	2.10	1.64	1.68
£25,000 - £49,999	1.79	1.10	0.87	0.88
£10,000 - £24,999	0.74	0.75	0.60	0.60
£5,000 - £9,999	0.60	0.60	0.48	0.48
£500 - £4,999	0.55	0.55	0.44	0.44
£500 - £4,999	0.30	0.50	0.40	0.40
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£5,000 - £9,999	0.90	0.50	0.40	0.40
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SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

A public schoolboy has been involved in what the Foreign Office described as a "prank" in Singapore which could end up with David Raven, 18, going to jail for theft. Mr Raven, a student at the Arnold School in Blackpool, went to Singapore as part of a school rugby trip. He was arrested following an incident in a nightclub where he was found to have a handbag containing 5,000 Singapore dollars (more than £2,000) in his possession. He will appear in court on 11 September to enter a plea. Meanwhile, he has spent two nights in jail and is now out on bail. His father, John Raven, told reporters that his son was a victim of mistaken identity, having had the bag thrust upon him after he emerged from a toilet to find himself in the midst of a melee. *Stephen Yates*

Charlie Kray, the elder brother of gangster twins Reggie and Ronnie, was remanded in custody for six days yesterday, charged with conspiracy to supply cocaine worth £76m. Kray, 70, looked relaxed at Redbridge Magistrates Court in east London. As he left the dock, Kray, 70, blew a kiss to his 45-year-old girlfriend, Judy Stanley. Neither he nor the two other men accused - builder Ronald Field, 49, and electrician Robert Gould, 39 - applied for bail.

A workman died during preparations for Oasis' concerts on the banks of Loch Lomond in Scotland. The ambulance service said the site worker, in his late 20s, was believed to have been crushed between a lorry and a fork-lift truck. The man was dead on arrival at the Vale of Leven hospital. He was thought to have been involved in testing the sound system for the concerts, which are expected to attract 80,000 fans tonight and tomorrow.

The future of Pure Genius, a "village" built on derelict land in south-west London, is in doubt after a senior High Court official today granted landowners Guinness court orders paying the way for eviction of its residents. "Villagers" from the green commune, on the banks of the River Thames, failed in their bid to prevent Guinness winning orders for possession which could lead to their immediate removal - and the end of a New Age dream. Pure Genius came into being earlier this year after 500 campaigners occupied the 13-acre site as a protest against land use.

A leading anti-smoking group faces legal action after reproducing a spoof advert for a cigarette brand called Emphysema. The hard-hitting advert, shown with an offer of "free lung cancer with every packet", has sparked protests from Imperial Tobacco, ASH, the Campaign for Freedom from Tobacco, distributed the cards with the advert to supporters and health promotion units. The charity said the matter was now in the hands of its lawyers.

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news

Why we suffer motorway sadness

Crumbling roads blamed on poor maintenance

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

On the M1, a slip road is closed at a few hours' notice because it has become unsafe. The M4/A4 into London has so many roadworks that the Highways Agency advises people to let the train take the strain.

Britain's roads are crumbling from lack of maintenance, according to the motoring organisations. In a letter replying to a parliamentary question by Tory MP Nicholas Winterton, Lawrie Haynes, the chief executive of the Highways Agency, said that the current planned spending on maintenance for trunk roads is "not sufficient to avoid some deterioration of the network".

But in an attempt to be reassuring, he added: "However, by working hard and innovatively, the Agency expects to be able to maintain safety and to minimise the effect on serviceability and value for money." The RAC says that the amount allocated to roads maintenance has been cut by £100m over two years. Next year only £250m will be spent, compared with £360m in 1994/5.

The Highways Agency said

that lack of maintenance was not the reason for closing the two slip roads linking the A1 and M1 in north London. Its spokesman, Alastair Frew, explained that the story of the bridge was "a one-off. It had been scheduled for strengthening next year to take lorries of 40 tons rather than 38 tons and it was found that it needed extra support". Part of the roadway was closed off to ensure traffic went down the middle, but lorries kept ploughing through the cones, so it was decided to close the bridge.

However, Mr Frew was unable to explain why cars, which weigh around a ton, could not be allowed to continue to use the bridge. "We considered that option but ruled it out. There would be tailbacks."

Edmund King, campaigns manager of the RAC, was sceptical about the reasons for the closure. He said: "They have known about this for months and should have done something about it. If you don't look after these structures, they start to fall apart."

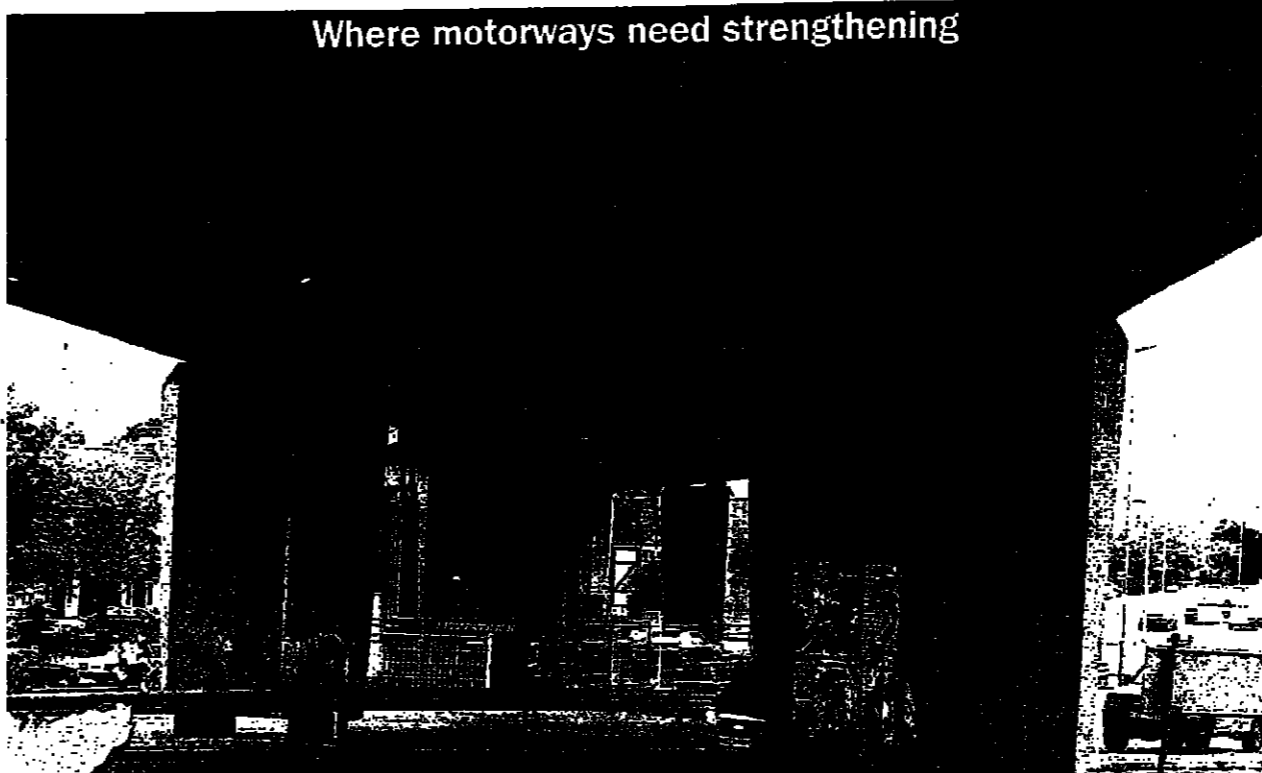
Similar problems have already emerged on the elevated section of the M4 in west London, which could take 10 years

to repair. In February, one of the 131 sections of the overhead part will be removed to assess how badly it has been damaged by corrosion. The motorway will be closed for several weeks, with the possibility of more serious closures.

Already, there have been jams caused by closing the A4 as it leads into the M4 and the Highways Agency has issued a leaflet saying: "Great Western Trains provide fast, frequent comfortable services over routes which parallel much of the M4/A4 from London Paddington to stations in Avon, South Wales and the West."

The British Road Federation said that, in another letter to an MP, Mr Haynes pointed to 34 other bridges on the motorway network that will need strengthening in the next few years. A BRF spokesman said: "The seriousness of this maintenance crisis has been predicted for some time."

The RAC said roads were surfaced every 42 years on average, as against the recommended 20 years, and 5 per cent of calls to its legal department, a total of 7,000 per year, related to damage caused by potholes and poor conditions.



Where motorways need strengthening

Road	Bridge	Target Completion
A282	Dartford Tunnel East, Kent	September 1998
A282	Essex Viaduct, Essex	September 1998
A1(M)	Donington, Northamptonshire	February 1998
A1(M)	Reservoir Railway, South Yorks	not decided
M1	Five Way Flyover Northbound, Barnet	June 1997
M1	Five Way Flyover Southbound, Barnet	June 1997
M1	Transport Farm Subway, Barnet	1998-99
M1	Berrygrove Interchange, North Herts	Feb 1998
M1	Berrygrove Interchange, South Herts	Feb 1998
M1	Berrygrove Interchange North A41, Herts	Feb 1998
M1	Berrygrove Interchange Road South, Hertfordshire	Nov 1998
M1	Berrygrove Service Road North, Hertfordshire	Nov 1998
M1	Berrygrove South A41, Hertfordshire	Nov 1998
M1	Old Paul, South Yorkshire	April 1998
M2	Medway Viaduct East, Kent	March 1998
M2	Medway Viaduct West, Kent	March 1998
M4	Medway River, Kent	March 1998
M4	Grand Union Canal, Hounslow	Sept 1998
M4	Thames Bridge, Berkshire	Feb 1997
M5	Huntspill River, Somerset	Feb 1997
M5	River Brue, Somerset	Feb 1997
M5	Huntsworth Viaduct, Somerset	Feb 1997
M5	River Tone, Somerset	November 1998
M6	Ray Hall Viaduct Bents 12/0 - 13/0, West Midlands	December 1997
M6	Ray Hall Viaduct Bents 11/0 - 12/0, West Midlands	June 1998
M11	Woodford West, Viaduct, Herts	November 1998
M40	Tetworth Pedestrian Underpass, Oxfordshire	Not decided
M40	Stoke Talmage, Oxfordshire	Not decided
M40	Nethercote Lane, Oxfordshire	Not decided
M40	Gould Road, West Yorkshire	Not decided
M62	Narrowbeck Railway, West Yorkshire	Not decided
M62	South Leeds Interchange 13 Railway	Not decided
M62	Beeston Interchange South, West Yorkshire	Not decided
M62	Beeston Interchange North, West Yorkshire	Not decided

Build-to-last philosophy is lost

In the mid-18th century, General Wade built hundreds of bridges to help the Hanoverian Army overcome the guerrilla resistance of the Highlanders, writes Christian Wolmar. In the 19th century, Brunel and Telford and their lesser-known contemporaries built countless viaducts, bridges and arches. Most of these structures, many of which are elegant additions to the

landscape, survive today, while their modern counterparts, the ugly, squat concrete box girders of the Sixties and Seventies are already falling apart.

Of course, few of the older bridges have to suffer the indignity of carrying an endless stream of 38-ton lorries belching a fiery cocktail of chemicals which, mixed with the salt laid down to de-ice roads, eats away

at their structure. Nevertheless, the new bridges fare badly in comparison because the design philosophy is different.

The Victorian arches which carry our railways through towns were over-engineered and built to last forever as the immediate cost did not figure as largely in our forefathers' assessment of projects as they do today. They had to be built very solidly because the Victorians were not so knowledgeable about the loading criteria, and therefore they had to play safe. Nowadays, according to John Whitwell, deputy secretary of the Institution of Civil Engineers, "we would use half the bricks that they did".

We no longer use bricks but modern materials which are not necessarily designed to last. Mr Whitwell said: "Of course, estuary crossings and really big projects are made to survive for 150 years or more, but many bridges are designed to be replaced in 30 years or so."



Brunel's Saltash bridge, Cornwall Photograph: Hulton Getty

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There's a great deal going on

arts news



For 40 years, Mark Gerson - pictured between portraits of playwright Tom Stoppard and novelist James Baldwin - has been synonymous with photographs of writers. Yesterday, the National Portrait Gallery opened *Literati*,

a retrospective to celebrate his 75th birthday. Gerson launched his career in time-honoured fashion by taking a picture of his aunt, the novelist and biographer, Betty Miller. Later, the

British photographer contributed to *Tatler* and provided numerous dust-jacket portraits for publishers, including Faber & Faber, Macmillan, and Weidenfeld and Nicolson. One of his most evocative images

is the group of poets he photographed in 1960 at a Faber party, showing the young Ted Hughes flanked by TS Eliot, WH Auden, Louis MacNeice and Stephen Spender.

On show for the first time in the exhibition, which runs until October 13, is his 1959 portrait of Evelyn Waugh at home with his family at Combe Florey, and other "at home" pictures of JB Priestley and PD James.

Photograph: Edward Sykes

UK film industry urged to think big

MARIANNE MACDONALD

The British film industry must develop a super-studio focusing on distribution if it is to become more than a bit-player dominated by the Americans, independent advisers told the Government yesterday.

A report by the Film Finance Advisory Committee, chaired by Sir Peter Middleton, chairman of the investment bank BZW, said that although British films are enjoying an upsurge, domestic share of box office is still less than 10 per cent, one of the lowest in Europe.

Hits such as *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Secrets and Lies* and *Trainspotting* masked a depressing reality. Although more British films were made last year than in any of the previous 20 - 81 compared to 54 in 1985 - investment in real terms was lower than 11 years ago. The proportion of British films which won widespread theatrical release also fell in the last decade, from more than 50 per cent to 27 per cent. Meanwhile, seven US studios garnered 40 per cent of the £50bn revenue generated by films worldwide in 1994.

The Middleton report said the British industry was held back by its small-scale, producer-led approach, under-capitalisation and lack of effective distribution. "Films are financed on a project-by-project basis which, given the producer's desire to see the films made, can often lead to the company accepting finance on unfavourable terms. The situation was exacerbated by a strongly held belief in the City that the British industry was too risky to invest in, following the collapse of companies such as Goldcrest and Palace Pictures, which made *Mona Lisa* and *The Crying Game*.

The solution was to create a distribution-led UK studio, said the advisers, who included Stephen Evans of Renaissance Films, the playwright Christopher Hampton and David Scott, Channel 4's director of finance. This would be capitalised at a level not previously achieved, allowing it to oversee the production and distribution of 20 British films a year.

Careful selection of projects and retention of the rights in the films it distributed would allow the studio to develop into a major company, owning a broad spread of rights as its main asset. "Through such a vehicle, the City could achieve the spread of risk across projects required to make a film investment viable," the report said.

If such a studio seemed too big a step to set up at once, three mini-studios could be started initially. Either way, the right to run the studio would be put out to tender to commercial operators by the Arts Council. The report also recommends that the Government introduces 100-per-cent write-off of production costs in the year they are incurred; abolishes the withholding tax on foreign film stars; rejoins the Council of Europe's *Euroimages* programme and establishes a Film Finance Council to link the City and film industry.

Cashing in on success

- Film production in Britain last year reached its highest level for 20 years - 81 films compared to 54 in 1985.
- Britain has won three out of every 10 Oscars in the last two decades.
- *Four Weddings and A Funeral* is the biggest British hit this decade - it took £71.5m at the box office for a £2m investment.
- *The Crying Game* (1991) is next, with box office takings of £46.6m.
- Mike Leigh's *Secrets and Lies* won the prestigious Palme d'Or as well as taking the best actress award at the Cannes Film Festival this year.
- Nick Park's plasticine creations in *Creature Comforts* and Wallace and Gromit films have won him three Oscars.
- Hollywood films shot in the UK have brought welcome income - *Mission: Impossible* at Shepperton Studios and *Braveheart* in Scotland are two recent examples.
- Highly-skilled and cost-competitive British post-production facilities are also in big demand by Hollywood producers.
- British investment in film production was running at £421m last year.

Conductors enter battle of Britten

Artspeople

with Marianne Macdonald

The debate over the putative Benjamin Britten statue rages on, the latest ammunition provided by the conductors Sir Colin Davis, Sir Benjamin Britten was born and bred in Aldeburgh. We have several other well-known people who were born here like George Crabbe the poet and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson. Shame.

than he expected: "It is not as if Benjamin Britten was born and bred in Aldeburgh. We have several other well-known people who were born here like George Crabbe the poet and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson. Shame."

The Museums Association is slimming about Virginia Bottomley's latest wheeze to get some good PR for the lottery. On Wednesday she announced that up to £500m was to be made available to museums so that people could tour collections on the Internet. There is only one flaw, the MA points out, which is that the money is not the Government's to spend; surely, when the lottery launched, the loot was supposed to be spent by independent appointees - not DNH?



Sir Colin Davis: Supports call for statue of Britten

Aldeburgh Town Council turned down this suggestion last month on the grounds that trees or a bird table would be of more practical benefit. Malcolm Williamson, the Master of the Queen's Music, lent his support by stating that Britten's music was ephemeral anyway. Meanwhile, the cause of all the fuss, Andrew Harris, Aldeburgh's town clerk, is keeping his head down. Mr Harris has become almost a celebrity since his words after a council meeting were quoted to a rather wider audience.

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BARTLETT

Action stations as America recalls grand design

A first-time visit to New York's Grand Central Station can be a perplexing experience. Step inside, preferably from the taxi pick-up area at the western end, and before you will soar the vaulted expanse of its concourse, surmounted by a blue-painted ceiling depicting a star-lit sky.

The monumental scale alone, even in this city of soaring office towers, will dumbfound you. But search the indicator boards for trains with romantic names to far-off cities like Chicago and St Louis, and you will be disappointed.

At its opening in 1913, Grand Central was a temple both to railroading, which had provided the arteries for America's growth into an industrial power, and to the vigour of New York itself. It boasted vast kitchens to prepare meals for those departing on transcontinental journeys as well as Turkish baths, private changing rooms and showers. These were the halcyon days. Today, the first-thrust destination served by trains at the station is New Haven, Connecticut, just 90 minutes away.

For most of this century, Grand Central, and all of the once-great railway stations of the eastern United States, were allowed to slide into undignified decay and neglect that reflected the slow displacement of passenger train travel by cars and the interstate road system and more recently by the aeroplane.

The original Penn Station, modelled after the Roman baths of Caracalla, was demolished in 1963 to make way for office buildings and the Madison Square Garden sports arena. Its modern counterpart, whence all remaining inter-city services from New York now depart, lies beneath the Garden and offers the visitor no inspiration at all. Rather, it is a cramped and threatening hodge.

The condition of America's passenger rail system, now in the hands of the semi-nationalised Amtrak, is still perilous. Penny-pinching in Washington has seen a sharp drop in federal subsidies to Amtrak, which has been forced to cut services further to stave off bankruptcy.

The great east coast stations, however, are suddenly the objects of love and care again. From Boston to Washington - with New Haven, New York, Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore, in between - stations are being reborn and not just as places to catch trains from but as destinations themselves.

The standard was set with the completion eight years ago of renovations to Washington's Union Station. A gleaming palace of towering white marble, it has become one of the capital's most visited sites, in part because it has been filled with no fewer than 100 shops, seven first-class restaurants and dozens of fast-food concessions.



Trading places: The New York post office building (above) where the nearby Penn Street station is to be relocated in \$300m development. Below: Grand Central station, currently undergoing renovation



RIDING THE IRON ROAD

New life is being breathed into the decaying splendour of US railway architecture. David Osborne in New York looks at a proud rebirth

Most recently refurbished was Baltimore's once-gloomy 19th century depot, which was rechristened with the "Penn Station Sensation Ball" last December. Proud Baltimoreans flocked to the event to dance and witness the re-starting of the station's giant clock, whose hands, as if to symbolise five decades of neglect, had been immobile since the 1940s.

The impetus for these renovations may, ironically, have been provided by the raising of the old Penn Station over 30 years ago. The outcry from appalled conservationists led to a new national awareness of urban

architecture and, specifically, the creation in New York of the Landmarks Preservation Commission which granted the city powers to protect buildings from the whims of developers. One of the commission's most important early acts was to repel plans to put a bowling alley in Grand Central's main waiting room and build a 50-storey office tower above it.

By resurrecting the stations - while also giving them some modern allure, with known-name shops and bistros - today's architects are also attempting to reverse the centrifugal forces of suburbanisation that gathered



in the Fifties and Sixties and in which depots like Grand Central played so important a part. To draw back the suburban dweller, if only for weekend visits, cities realised that they had to rediscover some of their lost civil lustre. There seemed no better place to start than in the stations themselves.

New York is joining in.

As any of the half million commuters who use Grand Central each day will attest, the terminus has temporarily become still more hellish than usual thanks to the start of a \$100m renovation project.

When it is finished in two years, however, it should be returned to something close to its original Beaux-Arts glory

(though, minus the Turkish baths and kitchens). False walls and ceilings that have been thrown up over the decades will be torn away, new entrances and staircases will be built and shops and restaurants will be added.

To the relief of many, the plans seek to preserve much of the original architectural integrity of the building and avoid

turning it into a shopping mall that just happens to have train platforms attached to it - a criticism often heard of the Union Station development. "Grand Central is New York's living room," Susan Fine, a director of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, said when the work began. "New Yorkers deserve a better living room than the one they have now."

Much more radical, however, are the plans for Penn Station. The much-lamented original structure, with an exterior facade on Eighth Avenue of tall Tuscan pillars, was designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White. Opposite the site, still stands the main New York Post Office, built by the same firm in a not dissimilar classic design.

After several years of struggle, the \$300m funds are almost in place to begin work on the obvious: moving Penn Station from the catacombs beneath Madison Square Garden into the Post Office building.

The front half of the building will be transformed into a station in the old classic style, though again with modern retail additions. Accessing the tracks will be no problem: they already run directly beneath the Post Office on their way to the existing station across Seventh Avenue.

The cliché runs that America's railway stations are its cathedrals. If so, then the people lost their religion somewhere around the middle of this century. Now the cathedrals, at least, are being returned to their original splendour, but whether that means a return also of the old devotion to travel by rail is another thing.

Economics will probably dictate that it will not.

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£500 - £999	3.00	£250 - £499	3.00
£250 - £499	2.80	£100 - £249	2.80
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£25 - £49	2.20	£10 - £24	2.20
£10 - £24	2.00	£5 - £9	2.00
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£0.50 - £0.99	1.20	£0.25 - £0.49	1.20
£0.25 - £0.49	1.00	£0.10 - £0.24	1.00
£0.10 - £0.24	0.80	£0.05 - £0.09	0.80
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£2,500 - £4,999	3.90	£1,000 - £2,499	3.40
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£250 - £499	3.30	£100 - £249	2.80
£100 - £249	3.10	£50 - £99	2.60
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£500 - £999	3.50	£500 - £999	3.20
£250 - £499	3.30	£250 - £499	3.00
£100 - £249	3.10	£100 - £249	2.80
£50 - £99	2.90	£50 - £99	2.60
£25 - £49	2.70	£25 - £49	2.40
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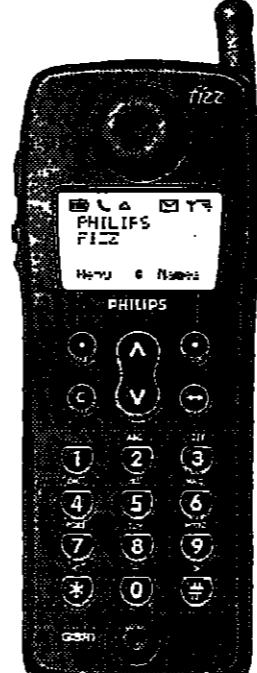
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international

Karadzic henchmen 'cleanse' poll lists

ANDREW GUMBLE
Belgrade

After ethnic cleansing comes electoral cleansing. With six weeks to go to the Bosnian elections, displaced ethnic Serbs are being registered en masse to vote in the Serb-controlled half of the country in the interests of ethnic purity, regardless of their place of origin and often regardless of their wishes.

Authorities in Bosnia and Serbia are coercing Serb refugees to register to vote in the "Republika Srpska", Radovan Karadzic's Serbian Bosnia, to ensure a powerful Serb presence there. For election day, the authorities plan to transport tens of thousands of people to strategically chosen polling stations, many in towns with a pre-war Muslim or Croat majority.

It is an attempt to heighten ethnic divisions between the Republika Srpska in the north

In practice, Bosnian Serb refugees have overwhelmingly opted for Form 2 and nominated electoral districts in the Republika Srpska. But they have not necessarily done so freely.

An international team inspecting a registration centre near Belgrade noted that part of the forms had been filled out in advance, with Srebrenica written in as the chosen electoral district in all cases. At a refugee camp visited by the Independent in Arzinja, south-west of Belgrade, an inmate said he had found the name Bosanski Brod written on his form. "Actually, I'd much rather go to the Banja Luka area," said the refugee, calling himself Milodrag. "I am from the mountains, and Bosanski Brod is swampy territory. I only hope my vote there won't oblige me to take up residence in the future."

The refugees depend on the Serb authorities to provide them with shelter and, for those in Bosnia, with humanitarian aid and know they risk being cut off if they do not do as they are told.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) in Europe, which is overseeing the election, has formally protested about conditions in the Bosnian town of Doboj, where it says Serb authorities have threatened to cut off aid to refugees if they do not toe the line.

In Serbia, just one group has been brave enough to issue a formal complaint - an association of Serb refugees from the western town of Drvar which wants to vote there, even though it is now irretrievably in Croat hands. Their wishes have now been adhered to but only after vocal objections.

This "cleansing" is only one of many problems besetting the Bosnian poll process. The election has already partly split along ethnic lines. In much of the Republika Srpska, Muslim and Croat parties have, either not bothered to stand or else know they have no chance of winning any real power.

If refugees have been told in advance where they will vote, it is partly because of the logistics of transporting them on the day. The chances are they will be taken by train to Bijeljina, north-eastern Bosnia and then bused to their electoral districts. None of this was envisaged when the Dayton accords were drawn up. "The idea was that everyone would go home and vote there. It was a nice idea but not very realistic," said Hans Peter Klein, an OSCE representative.

Milodrag, the refugee being sent to vote in Bosanski Brod, said: "The only Serbs left there are old women, whom they beat up and persecute. There is no future there for me or my family."

"This puts the final touch on ethnic cleansing... The Serbs will ensure themselves the biggest possible majority"

and east and the Muslim-Croat federation to the west and south. It thus subverts the Dayton peace accords, whereby the elections were meant to bring Bosnia's divided ethnic groups closer together.

"This puts the final touch on ethnic cleansing," said Marwan Elkhoury, spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Belgrade. "The Serbs will ensure themselves the biggest possible majority in the Republika Srpska while keeping as many of their voters as possible out of federation territory."

This electoral engineering exploits the complex rules for refugee voters, who make up at least half Bosnia's 3.5 million electorate. In theory, refugees can choose to vote in the area where they were registered in a 1991 census or nominate entirely new electoral districts for themselves. If they choose the former, they fill out what is known as Form 1 and have the option of postal voting; if the latter, they name a new electoral district on Form 2 on the understanding they will travel there on election day.

Germany seeks to extradite Priebe

PAUL HOLMES
Reuters

Rome - Just hours after a military court found him guilty of murder but set him free, former SS Captain Erich Priebe was under arrest in a Rome prison yesterday as Italian authorities tried to limit the damage from one of the most controversial judicial decisions since the Second World War.

Italian police rearrested Priebe during the night at the court, ending an eight-hour siege by angry young protesters following the verdict. He was taken to Rome's Regina Coeli jail, where some of the 335 men and boys, including 75 Jews, shot in an SS massacre in 1944 spent their final hours before they were trucked to the Ardeatine caves for execution.

The rearrest of the 83-year-old German on a temporary detention order followed notice from Germany that prosecutors there intended to seek his extradition for two killings.

But it was far from clear that a German extradition request, which Bonn has 40 days to submit, would succeed. There was doubt whether Rome could extradite Priebe pending a planned appeal by the Italian military prosecutor against Thursday's verdict. Nor were German officials certain he could be tried because European law bars prosecuting someone twice on the same charges.

Argentina, which agreed to Priebe's extradition to Italy in November 1995, must give its consent to any onward move. It has already said Priebe will not

be allowed back to rejoin his wife in the Andean ski resort where they have lived since 1948.

Priebe had denied throughout his three-month trial that he played a leading role in the massacre, carried out in reprisal for a bomb attack on German troops and the worst atrocity in Italy during the Second World War.

The court found Priebe responsible for multiple killings and



Priebe: Rearrested by Italian authorities

rejected his key defence - that he would have been shot if he had disobeyed orders. But it took his age and clean post-war record into account in mitigation and, in a judgment that was condemned across the political spectrum, by Italian and foreign Jewish groups and by a press that blamed the military court for bringing Italy's legal system into worldwide disrepute, ruled that because he did not act with premeditation and cruelty, punishment had lapsed after 30 years under a statute of limitation.



Wild frontier: Supplies arriving for Russian guards on the Tajik-Afghan border, where the Kremlin is backing Tajikistan against guerrilla insurgents

Photograph: AP

Belarus activists claim rights are under threat

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

The United States will decide soon whether to grant political asylum to two Belarussian opposition leaders who say their lives are in danger because they have exposed human-rights abuses in the former Soviet republic. Zenon Poznyak and Sergei Naumchik made their application in Washington last Tuesday, saying President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus had ordered them to be "neutralised".

Mr Poznyak, leader of the Belarussian Popular Front, a nationalist opposition movement, left Belarus in April while under threat of arrest for organising rallies against Mr Lukashenko's policy of forging an economic and political union with Russia. If he and Mr Naumchik, his assistant, were to be granted asylum, it would be the first such case involving any former Soviet republic since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991.

Opposition politicians say this would seriously tarnish Belarus's international image, already battered by Mr Lukashenko's reputation for idiosyncratic, pro-Russian au-

thoritarianism. "There is constant pressure on the opposition. We cannot conceal the fact that human rights are repeatedly violated. Even parliament has no access to state television," said Pyotr Kravchenko, a former foreign minister.

The US State Department, which advises immigration officials on granting asylum, may take the view that Mr Poznyak and Mr Naumchik would not be in danger of severe persecution if they returned to Belarus. But US diplomats are under few illusions about Mr Lukashenko's rule. "We've been concerned by a lot of the actions of the government and been concerned by some infringements of human rights," said Nicholas Burns, the State Department spokesman.

Since coming to power in 1994 Mr Lukashenko has suspended trade unions, dismissed newspaper editors and ordered a crackdown on "anti-presidential actions". About 200 people received short jail terms for taking part in opposition-led demonstrations in spring, and on Monday, Mr Lukashenko banned rallies for the duration of Belarus's harvest.

His repressive policies and

enthusiasm for union with Russia have prompted a backlash, with seven opposition parties, from nationalists to Communists, signing a declaration last week that denounced Mr Lukashenko and warned of the danger of totalitarian rule.

Undeterred, the President is seeking constitutional changes that would extend his term in office from five to seven years, enabling him to rule unchallenged until 2001.

If Mr Lukashenko cares about his image in the US, he did himself no favours last Thursday by appearing to lend credence to a wild accusation from a Communist member of the Russian parliament that the CIA is plotting to overthrow him.

Viktor Ilyukhin alleged that the CIA had set up a base in Warsaw to engineer Mr Lukashenko's fall by means of strikes and street protests.

US diplomats dismissed the allegations as nonsense. It did little to improve the atmosphere of US-Belarussian relations, which suffered last year when Belarussian border guards shot down a hot-air balloon taking part in a European race, killing the two US pilots.

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international

Hero's funeral for Aideed, the UN's most wanted man

Mogadishu - "God will destroy Washington," he declared defiantly in 1993, as the United States led a series of destructive air-strikes on the capital and sent in their most highly trained soldiers to find him.

Brigadier General Mohamed Farah Aideed, Somalia's most notorious warlord, survived - but even he could not escape death for ever. His body was laid to rest in the capital, Mogadishu, yesterday.

Gen Aideed, who last year declared himself President of Somalia, will be remembered by the West as the man who humiliated the United Nations - which came to bring peace and humanitarian aid, and left last year with little or nothing accomplished. Even the US, whose troops entered the country under the cover of tremendous fire power, was forced to admit defeat.

His faction's radio station announced that the 62-year-old leader had suffered a heart attack, but sources here say that he died of gunshot wounds received last week in fighting for control of the capital.

Asked by the Independent who was responsible for his death, an old man quoted a So-

David Orr reports on the death of the warlord who humiliated the West

mal proverb: "Victory is always claimed by many people".

Gen Aideed is reported to have been wounded by fighters loyal to Ali Mahdi Mohamed, his bitter rival for overall power.

The coffin, draped with the Somali flag, was carried to the cemetery atop a Toyota Land-cruiser, and the national anthem was played as his remains were lowered into the ground.

The streets of Mogadishu were unusually calm last night as Muslim prayers were chanted in the mosques.

Gen Aideed, an abstemious man who neither drank nor smoked, commanded a fanatical following amongst his followers. He was widely feared for his explosive temper and domineering manner. The general's interviews with the foreign media often became ranting monologues.

There was international outrage when Gen Aideed's supporters dragged the corpses of lynched American soldiers through the city's streets.

This time three years ago the US had a \$25,000 reward out for Gen Aideed's capture "dead or

alive". But the general evaded capture, and was later taken to a hero and saviour in southern Mogadishu.

Between the UN's arrival late in 1992 and its withdrawal last year, some 100 Blue Helmets and scores of American troops were killed in fighting in and around Mogadishu. Gen Aideed, branded as the UN's most wanted man, was held responsible for most of these killings.

In much of the rest of the country he was vilified as an evil man who would stop at nothing for power.

But he was hailed as a hero by his supporters yesterday as his body was taken from his house to a mosque and then on to the cemetery in the southern part of the city which he controlled.

Among the mourners, who numbered more than 1,000 people, were many women and children who cried openly.

"We will follow his policies," said the porter by the graveside. "He was a great man. His death will not have been in vain."

Obituary, page 11



Mohamed Farah Aideed: Somalia warlord who humiliated the United Nations

Climate of fear quells unrest in Indonesia

Protests have united Suharto's regime, reports Richard Lloyd Parry in Jakarta

Seven days after the worst rioting in Indonesia for 20 years, the government of President Suharto has taken advantage of the situation to launch a campaign of intimidation against its opponents. Despite international criticism of its repressive methods, the regime appears to have ridden out the unrest and may actually find itself more united than it was a week ago.

The riots were triggered by a police raid on the offices of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) but tension had been mounting for months as generals and civilians in the government faced up to a dilemma: who will succeed Mr Suharto?

At 75 and after 30 years of unquestioned power, he is looking more and more like a man who has passed his political sell-by date. Recently widowed, and dogged by rumours about his health, he has alienated businessmen, aides and ordinary Indonesians by granting tax breaks to members of his immediate family. "Most people in the government think he's lost his touch," said a Western diplomat yesterday. "He's looking old and he no longer has the power to inflame his people - they just don't believe the rhetoric any more."

But if the prospect of an ailing, faltering president is unappetising, the alternative is uncertainty. Mr Suharto seized power from his predecessor, Sukarno, after a creeping military coup in which 500,000 people died in anti-Communist pogroms. Contemporary Indonesians have never witnessed a peaceful transfer of power and no one in Jakarta seems to have any idea of who might credibly take over.

Part of the problem is Mr Suharto's habit of appointing as his closest aides weak men who have never been allowed to remain in power long enough to establish themselves. Constitutionally, the succession would fall to the Vice-President, Try Sutrisno, a colourless figure who may yet turn out to be just what the country needs to tide it over the transitional period after Suharto's demise. But the

forces threatening to drive Indonesia apart will require a stronger presence to keep them under control.

This is where Megawati Sukarnoputri came in - as daughter of Sukarno and the popular leader of one of two officially recognised opposition parties, she was being spoken of as a possible successor to Mr Suharto in elections in 1998. The order to depose her as PDI leader is believed to have come from Mr Suharto. But the rigged party congress in June, when she was unseated in favour of a puppet figure, was largely the work of Abri, the armed forces.

Last Saturday, as thousands of Jakartans took to the streets, the plan appeared to have misfired. But in a week Abri has reasserted its authority with a combination of coolness and hysteria which appears, for the short term at least, to have defused the situation.

The full details of what happened may never be known but the military appear to have acted with discipline. If not, restraint. Hundreds of people were injured and dozens are missing but, despite rumours about massacres and "disappearances", there is conclusive evidence of only three deaths.

The hysteria came in the middle of the week when Abri, without offering evidence, said the riots were the work of Communist insurgents. Since then the security forces have carried out a wave of arrests in what is looking increasingly like a general crackdown on peaceful critics of the government. On Tuesday night Mochtar Pakpahan, an independent trade-union leader, was arrested and charged with subversion.

Mr Suharto has given permission for police to question MPs, including Ms Megawati and seven members of her PDI faction.

Technology that gives the edge to 'Big Brother'

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The news that Indonesia's internal security forces are using a British computer system cast an interesting light on the Home Secretary Michael Howard's suggestion that the UK is a "centre of excellence" for counter-terrorist surveillance. The idea of such centres was endorsed by leaders of the Western industrial states and Russia at their summit on terrorism in Paris on Tuesday.

One man's counter-terrorist system is another man's Big Brother. Britain's long experience in Northern Ireland has helped shape counter-terrorist technology - hardware and software - which is of potential value to states wishing to keep their populations under control.

Among British military and security equipment sold to Indonesia in the last decade was a prototype of Generics - the Nato command information system developed by Plessey Defence Systems of Ilford, Essex. Generics can display complex information about events unfolding across a landscape, and could be used to monitor traffic as well as in military or security situations. It would enable the user to concentrate forces efficiently in response to demonstrations and riots.

Industry sources yesterday said Plessey had installed a command information system, which was mainly a briefing tool, in Jakarta in 1986. This was before the Generics system proper was developed; Indonesia never received the fully developed version. Local Indonesian companies made some changes which caused problems, and would not let Plessey back in to correct them, suggesting that the system may have been adapted for local purposes.

A decade later, Plessey supplied the Police Information

Manager, selected by Avon and Somerset and South Yorkshire constabularies. Like Generics, it logs incidents and telephone calls as they occur and displays them graphically. Such a system has obvious uses in countering outbreaks of violence or dissent.

The information can be relayed to high-resolution displays including maps and detailed town plans - suitable for internal security operations. According to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Indonesia was the first customer for Generics.

Plessey had recently won a UK Ministry of Defence contract worth £35 million for an automated, computer-assisted electronic warfare system which also used Generics to help assemble complex data.

A user could click on a particular house on the map, to obtain a read-out of who lived there, which political party they supported, any criminal records, and so on. A policeman approaching the house would then know what to expect. Uses could be benign - the system would be useful to fire services in, for example, recording the position of hydrants. If the occupant were deaf, they would know to knock loudly. If he were known to be a drug dealer, the approach might be different.

The prototype system supplied to Indonesia was a graphics tool specifically designed for a briefing room in Jakarta.

Industry sources last night said that, given advances in computers and information systems in the last decade, any system Indonesia is using to manage the current disturbances would probably have little in common with the Generics prototype.

However, a graphical display of "incidents and resources", updated with more recent software, would clearly help the Indonesian regime to keep tabs on the population.

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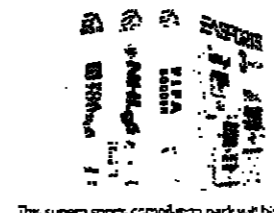
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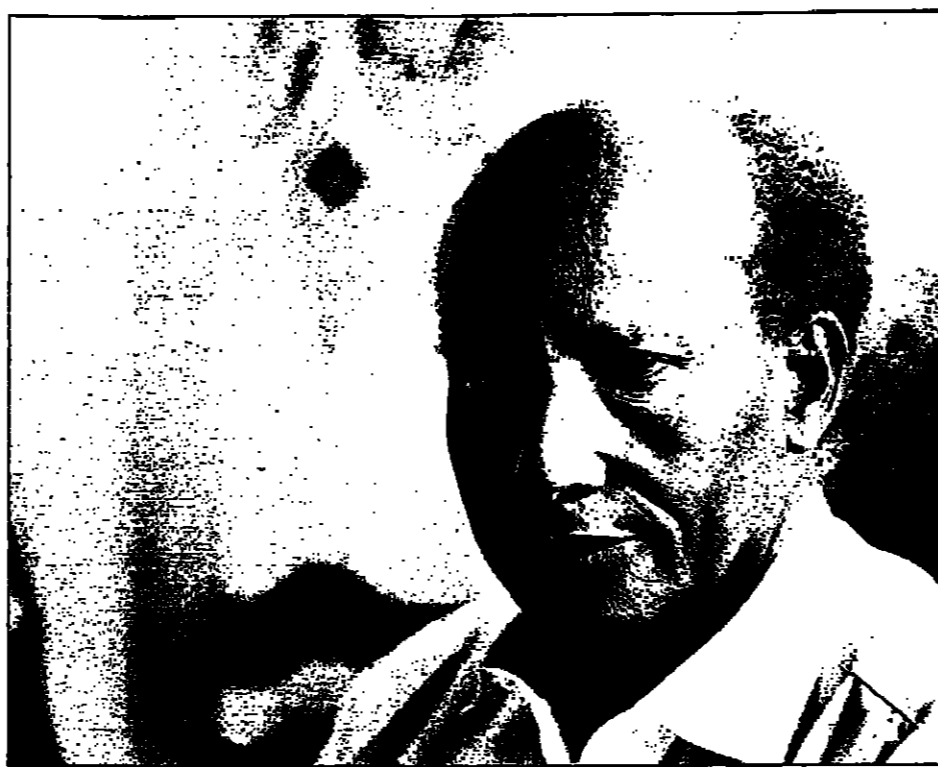
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Brig-Gen Mohamed Farah Aideed



Aideed: the right to lead a new Somalia Photograph: David Stewart Smith / Katz Pictures

Brigadier-General Aideed, a fiercely controversial figure who has dominated the Somali political scene since 1991, died in his Mogadishu home yesterday, from gunshot wounds received in intra-clan fighting.

Mohamed Farah Hassan "Aideed" was born in the desert scrubland of upcountry Somalia, around 1930 - although the demands of the colonial education services led to his claiming to be a few years younger than he was and he later adopted 15 December 1934 as his "official" birthday. He was the fifth child in a family of 13, and his kin were Habar Gedir, a sub-clan of the Hawiye, perhaps the largest of the Somali clans. The Hawiye are to be found in central and southern Somalia, and although divided they form the greater part of the population of the capital city, Mogadishu.

Somali children gain nicknames at an early age. Although he became president, the late Major-General Mohamed Siad Barre was never able to shake "Afweyne" or "big mouth". Mohamed Farah was more fortunate: "Aideed" means "rejection of insults" and is attributed to the reaction of his mother when a neighbour commented that her child was of a darker complexion than she.

His nomadic parents, Farah Hassan, a minor chief, and Fatuma Salah, taught Mohamed to know and look after the family camels, sheep and goats before encouraging him to walk across the unmarked border into the Ethiopian Ogaden to seek instruction in the Koran. After two years of learning morals and verses by rote, he returned to Somalia with the restless ambition of obtaining further schooling. He was already demonstrating a fearlessness and an independent spirit. His elder brother, a policeman in Galkayo, a sleepy market town in north-central Somalia, introduced him to rudimentary Italian. English

typewriting and a greater awareness of colonialism and the world beyond Somalia.

In late adolescence, Aideed laboured on a new airstrip for Galkayo before joining his brother who had been reported near the fine paved Italian highway which linked that frontier town with the capital - the Strada Imperiale. It beckoned, and Aideed went to live with some soldiers at Wardsley military camp in Mogadishu. He twice took service with British officers in attempts to better his English, even accompanying one to Gabredarre, in Ethiopia. There he made his first political commitment, joining the Somali Youth League (SYL), the largest pre-independence political grouping. In August 1950 he enlisted in the Italian Gendarmaria.

Military training also provided scope for improving his Italian and sufficient financial security to marry his first wife. He became a quartermaster clerk and, by 1954, was a special cadet and won a place at Infantry School in Italy. The Italian authorities were on the lookout for a cadre to take over the administration of a soon-to-be-independent Somalia. Aideed was sent to the Nato Infantry School at Cesano in Rome.

Instruction was not confined to military subjects and Aideed bought himself an Italian edition of the Koran with which to improve his language. Self-possessed, he never shied from confrontation. On a visit to the home country, the Italian Administrator of the UN Trust Territory of Somalia, Enrico Anzilotti, asked to meet the 13 young Somali trainee officers then in Italy. After he had explained the urgent need for an efficient indigenous police force, Aideed flatly interjected, "If you leave Somalia defenceless, our people will immediately establish a National Army." "When you get your independence, you can do what you

want" was the testy response.

As luck would have it, there were white South Africans on the vessel on which the Somali returned to East Africa. Aideed prepared his fellows for a public scene but the girl he asked to dance accepted. Back in Mogadishu, he was instrumental in the lifting of a ban on "local officers" at the officers' changing rooms at the Lido Beach Club and in requiring that white NCOs salute black officers.

Meantime in Mogadishu the establishment of a National Army was approved. Aideed had lobbied for this and was transferred. At the ceremony on 1 July 1960 which marked the union between north and south, the former British Protectorate and the Italian-administered UN Trust, and the formation of the independent Somali Republic, the unit which raised the new nation's flag - the five-

pointed white star on a light blue background - was commanded by Aideed. It was a moment he never forgot. That evening he was promoted Captain.

General Abdulla Daud, the first commander of the National Army, trusted Aideed and took him on delegations to the United States, Italy, (West) Germany, Nasser's Egypt and the Soviet Union, before sending him as military attaché in Moscow in order to study for three years at staff level at Frunze Military Academy.

Back in 1969 in Somalia, a few whispers were heard in the sunny and sandy seaside capital, Mogadishu, that General Mohamed Siad Barre, by then army commander, and colleagues in the National Army and the Police, were planning a coup d'état. The Somali President, Abdirashid Ali Sher-

marke, had just been shot dead, and Aideed, by then a colonel and uninvolved in the plot, reported its existence to the civilian authorities, who discounted his warnings. A few days later, on 21 October 1969, a "bloodless revolution", soon to proclaim "scientific socialism", took place. The country was renamed "The Somali Democratic Republic", but the people's first tentative experiment with democratic government, from independence in 1960 to 1969, was clearly over. Twenty-one years of ever more repressive dictatorship - not to mention the first foothold of the Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa - ensued.

It was decided to bundle Aideed off into obscurity as a counsellor or military attaché in the Sudan or Tanzania, but he declined and suggested the soldiers be returned to barracks. He was imprisoned for six harsh years, time enough for reflection and resolution - and, his enemies would later add, for the balance of his mind to become unshaken.

On his eventual release from prison, he was left jobless for two years, before becoming a director in Somali's nationalised public corporations. His not inconsiderable military ability had to be recognised as tensions with Ethiopia mounted. He was promoted Brigadier-General and made an aide-de-camp in the presidency, with responsibility for military affairs. But the president always feared him. In due course he was sent to New Delhi, as ambassador. Meanwhile Siad Barre's regime began the slide into chaos.

The first major attempt to overthrow Siad Barre's dictatorship, staged by the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) (largely Mijertein clan) was crushed. The second attempt staged by the Somali National Movement (SNM) (largely Isaaq clan) led to full-scale civil war in the north. Both the SSDF and the SNM enjoyed some too covert support from

Colonel Mengistu, the dictator of Ethiopia. With SNM encouragement, sections of the Ogaden clan also took up arms. But the key remained the Hawiye sub-clans, especially those controlling the capital. Their leaders met secretly and chose Dr Ismail Jumale, prominent in human rights circles, to lead them. The United Somali Congress (USC) was formed.

With the authority of the elders, Jumale contacted Aideed and invited him to abandon his diplomatic post and organise armed opposition on behalf of the Hawiye. The SNM helped him visit Ethiopia and obtain support. While these preparations were taking place, Jumale and a second prominent Hawiye leader died. The fighters elected Aideed to lead them but the civilians, both in exile in Rome and in Mogadishu, were divided and remain so to this day.

However, in January 1991, mounting guerrilla activity caused the dictator to flee the capital for his own Marchan clan homelands in the south-west. Plans for such an eventuality had been agreed between the resistance groups so that a national government might be formed. But before Aideed could re-enter Mogadishu, prominent businessmen and professionals known as the "Manifesto Group", who had sought to effect a peaceful transfer of power, declared one of their number, Ali Mahdi, as "interim president"; he formed a "government". Aideed reported this event on his satellite phone to the then leader of the SNM, who predicted the secession of the north. There were meetings in Djibouti and elsewhere to resolve these problems, but they all failed, although at one of them Aideed was elected chairman of the USC.

Aideed broke off bloody confrontations which had developed with Ali Mahdi's supporters, to confront the remnants of Barre's army, whose depredations had exacerbated worsening famine conditions in the agricultural food-producing parts of the country between its only rivers, the Juba and Shabelle. Barre eventually fled to Kenya where he and his entourage were accommodated at public expense in a luxury hotel - until popular indignation led President Moi to pack them off to Nigeria.

For months Italian authorities meddled in the Somali cauldron, possibly because there were commercial links between leading Italian politicians and their families and the family of the Somali dictator. The corruption came to be exposed not through Somalia, but in Italy itself. Fragile discussion with Somalia, in which the UN also took a part, broke down and inter- and, more seriously, intra-clan clashes worsened.

The American armed forces came and went, as did the United Nations. The Somali remain in disarray. In due course, the name of Aideed, once demonised by the Pentagon and the Security Council, passed into the mythology of rebellion and he was invited to give the keynote address to the Pan-African Congress meeting in Kampala in 1993. But at home in Somalia even his own political and personal alliances began to splinter. His ambitions never faltered, for he always considered he had won with his sword the right to lead a new Somalia. But the disappointed old soldier was ever more obliged to return to what he knew best - the urban guerrilla fighting that has wasted so many lives and now cost him his own.

Richard Greenfield

Mohamed Farah Hassan "Aideed", soldier born Beles Wene, Italian Somalia 1930; Chairman, Somali National Alliance and Somali National Congress 1991-95; three times married; died Mogadishu, Somali Republic 2 August 1996.

Michel Debré



Debré: 'complete loyalty' to de Gaulle Photograph: Hulton Getty

Michel Debré, Prime Minister of France from 1959 to 1962, was a politician and reformer of energy and vigour, devoted to the Gaullist cause. He will be remembered for his administrative reforms and drafting the constitution of the Fifth Republic and for his abilities as a legislator rather than as Prime Minister or as theorist.

Debré was born in Paris in 1912. His paternal grandfather was the chief rabbi of Alsace. His father, Robert Debré, was an eminent paediatrician and the instigator of numerous campaigns, including family law reform, and was on friendly terms with many politicians of the Third Republic, including Paul Reynaud.

It was Reynaud who brought Michel Debré into his private office in the Ministry of Finance (1938-39) and it was there he met de Gaulle. He was educated at the prestigious Lycée Louis le Grand in Paris and then at the Paris Law Faculty and the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques before starting a career in the Conseil d'Etat, the government legal office, whose members regularly take leave for political work: he was an "auditeur" in 1934 and a "maître des requêtes" in 1942 but did not resume this career after the war.

During the war Debré was mobilised as a lieutenant in the cavalry, was captured and escaped. He joined Emmanuel Monick, secretary to General Nogues, and went to Morocco, where he met Jacques Faure, then an army captain. In 1941 he returned to Paris to work in the

Conseil d'Etat, which served as a cover for Gaullist resistance activity, and started planning the shape of the future Republic through the Comité d'Etudes de la Résistance. He later left occupied France and moved between London and Algiers. He entered clandestinely under the name of "Jacques" but continued to advocate governmental reform in pamphlets.

It was Debré who was given responsibility by de Gaulle for the re-establishment of the local government corps of prefects after the Liberation and he also became the regional Republican Commissioner (a sort of super prefect) for Angers in 1944. In 1945 de Gaulle, then prime minister, took him into his private office to deal with the reform of the civil service. Here he was principally responsible for creating the élite Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA), the institution through which French higher civil servants pass. He was briefly its head and ENA is a monument to his reforming drive.

Debré was an unsuccessful Radical candidate before entering the Senate in 1948 for Indre-et-Loire - he remained until 1959 - and was head of the Gaullist secret group from 1955 to 1958. From the Senate he attacked "the regime", the rapidly changing governments of the Fourth Republic, and called for the return to power of General de Gaulle with a stream of violent word-whippings of politicians and the Fourth Republic, doing for the senators what

Jacques Soustelle (the Gaullist leader in the National Assembly) did for the deputies - predicting a crisis and describing the Republic's failings in lurid terms.

The only possible hope, the General, he said, had been maliciously kept out of power by "those princes who govern us". He declared that "Necessary insurrections where there is compromise or surrender of authority are marked with the sacred seal of legitimacy."

There were few meetings of conspirators with which he was not connected: Jacques Faure was put under 40 days' arrest for planning a coup, and Debré was implicated in the affair of the attempted murder of General Raoul Salan, commander-in-chief in Algeria, who was thought at the time to be less than committed to a French Algeria. He always denied plotting, but was clearly close to De Gaulle and other Gaullist plotters in 1958, when the insurrection in Algeria turned into a call, led by Salan, for de Gaulle's return to power.

Debré nailed his colours to the mast of the cause of French Algeria. His journal *Le Courrier de la Colère* was violently in favour of French Algeria, arguing that the only way Algeria could be retained was if the General returned to power, and he went as far as to claim that insurrection for a French Algeria was legitimate. It was the continuation of the seemingly insoluble Algerian war which brought the General back to power in 1958. Debré became Minister of

Justice in de Gaulle's government of July 1958: he was in charge of the drafting of the constitution for the Fifth Republic, which came into force at the beginning of 1959. He did not have a completely free hand but the constitution was stamped with his ideas. The Fifth Republic was to strengthen the executive and to downgrade the parliament.

The interpellation (opposition parliamentary questioning aimed at harassing the government), which Debré had used against the Fourth Republic, was removed and it was made more difficult to defeat the government, to harass or to pressure it.

Debré became the first Prime Minister of the Fifth Republic and made his contempt for the Assembly and for the "Fourth Republic's politicians" very clear. What he did not create was a presidential constitution, but power moved steadily into the hands of de Gaulle, to the extent that De Gaulle memorably asked "M. Debré existe-t-il?" De Gaulle made the important decisions, reversed Debré's, contradicted him and kept him in the dark.

Debré was a loyal servant and, despite having to work in the shadow of the General, had numerous accomplishments. The "Debré law of 1959" dampened the religious schools question and Debré defied the *bouillottes*, the private distillers' lobby. However the Algerian problem dominated affairs. It became clear that the General's direction was towards decolonisation, which put Debré in an invidious position. Debré crushed the in-

urrection in Algeria tripped off by the French Algeria unconditionalists, who realised where de Gaulle was going. As de Gaulle put it Debré "adapted each of my initiatives with complete loyalty". He offered to resign, but the President asked him to continue in office until the Algerian war was over. By then Debré had become an embarrassment, was unceremoniously replaced with Pompidou and advised "to travel".

Debré was unable to win a seat in the 1962 elections but in May 1963 won a by-election for the island of La Réunion (a seat

he retained until 1968). He was involved in the Gaullist party but was back in government when he replaced Valéry Giscard d'Estaing as Finance Minister in January 1966. A certain interventionism brought Debré close to socialist conceptions of the state but the anti-American rhetoric of previous years had little effect on his actions (or American investment).

Appointed Foreign Minister after the Gaullist victory in the elections of June 1968, he had the misfortune to be at that post when the unrealistic nature of de Gaulle's foreign policy was made

clear by the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Debré dismissed it as a "temporary hold-up" on the road to co-operation with the Soviet bloc. Later there was a re-focus of French interest in the Eastern threat and a restoration of interest in the Atlantic Alliance.

Debré was moved to defence when Pompidou won the presidency in 1969 but the improvement in relations with the US continued. His presence ensured that de Gaulle's legacy would be respected. He aired the views that France could count only on herself; that the independent nuclear deterrent was key and that French forces would remain under strict French control.

Within the centre-right presidential majority, but semi-detached, Debré took up a number of causes including anti-Europeanism and opposition to decentralisation (on the grounds that it weakened the authority of the state). He shared the Gaullist party's hostility to Giscard and the state of France under him. But it was opposition to European integration - the monetary snake, direct election of the parliament - that drew fire. He stood with Jacques Chirac as joint leader of the Gaullist ticket for the European elections of 1979. The poor showing of the Gaullists (16 per cent) led Chirac to abandon the anti-European line and to Debré's distancing himself from the new leadership. In 1981 Debré stood as a candidate in the presidential elections, accusing Giscard of having

"wasted seven years". The result, a mere 1.65 per cent of the vote, was insignificant but did contribute to the disintegration of the right. It was Debré (with other Gaullist leaders) who led the attacks on the Socialists when, after favourable by-elections in 1982, they felt the tide turning against President Mitterrand.

Michel Debré was a tough and brutal pamphleteer but was constrained to accept the most contradictory of U-turns. He admired British institutions, such as English conservatism, though he was no friend to the Mother of Parliaments. He was an opponent of European integration who accepted the Common Market; an intolerant partisan for a France Algeria who accepted decolonisation; a legalist and hymnist of state authority who advocated insurrection, and the critic of spinelessness who effaced himself before President de Gaulle. The only thing which explains these paradoxes is a devotion to Charles de Gaulle beyond common measure.

D. S. Bell

Michel Debré, politician: born Paris 15 January 1912; Senator, Indre-et-Loire 1948-58; Keeper of the Seals 1958-59; Prime Minister of France 1959-62; Deputy for La Réunion 1963-86; Minister of the Economy and Finance 1966-68; Foreign Minister 1968-69; Defence Minister 1969-73; MEP 1979-80; married 1931 Anne Marie Lemaire (two sons); died Montlouis-sur-Loire 2 August 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS
CRAIG: To Steven and Fiona (née Brennan), a daughter, Don Ross.
PEARSON: On Thursday 18 July 1996, in Herts, Northumberland, to Catherine Barradough and Harry Pearson, a daughter, Maissie Ida.

DEATHS
CLARK: Alan, formerly Director of the Sussex Arts Centre, died peacefully on 31 July, aged 46. Funeral at Woodvale Crematorium, Brighton on 7 August at 2.15. No flowers please, but donations to Sussex Bets, Beveridge Road, Brighton BN2 4DE.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL. Telephone 0171-253 2011 or fax 0171-253 2010, or e-mail gazette@independent.co.uk. Births and deaths are charged at £5.50 a line (VAT extra).

Forthcoming marriages

Mr A. D. Hicks and Miss C. M. Taylor. The engagement is announced between Andrew, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Clive Hicks, of Ealing, London, and Catherine Mary (Kate), elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Tim Taylor, of Goudhurst, Kent.

Birthdays

TODAY: Mr Richard Adler, composer, 75; Sir John Anson, senior civil servant, 66; Mr Osvaldo Ardiles, football manager, 43; Air Marshal Sir Peter Baird, former Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Strike Command, 70; Mr Tony Bennett, singer, 70; Mr Steven Berkoff, actor and director, 59; Lt-Gen Sir Alexander Galloway, former Principal, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, 82; Mr Peter Easton, jockey, 67; Mr Josh Clifford, racehorse trainer, 55; Mr Nick Harvey MP, 35; Baroness James of Holland Park (Ed. James), writer, 76; Professor Anthony James, Rector, Royal College of Art, 52; Mr William Powell MP, 48; Mr Anthony Sampson, writer, 70; Sir David Scott, former diplomat, 77; Mr Martin Sheen, actor, 56; Miss Sue Sloman, director, London TEC Council, 47; Mr Michael Stern MP, 54; Mr Jack Straw MP, 50; Sir Jock Taylor, chairman, Siemens, 72; Sir George Wallis, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 85; Walther or Waltheof.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Births Stanley Baldwin, statesman, 1867; Rupert Chawner Brooke, poet, 1887. Deaths: Sir Richard Arkwright, inventor of the spinning frame, 1792; Joseph Conrad, novelist, 1924. On this day: first ship passed through the Panama Canal, 1914. Today is the Feast Day of St Germanus of Auxerre, St Thomas of Hales or Dover, and St Waltheof or Waltheof.

Mr Post-Evangelical, is there a message for me?

A Hindu friend, on the remote east coast of Sri Lanka, had in his sitting-room an image of the god Ganesh - the one who looks like an elephant. Young and foolish, I wondered why an educated man would possess such an object - Manoharan was a scientist, an industrial chemist. So I asked him if he truly believed in Ganesh.

"Yes," he replied. "I accord to Ganesh every divine attribute - except that of existence."

This seemed dangerous stuff to a Christian, but I concluded that such a view of reality might be normal to a modern Hindu, who draws on a couple more millennia of thinking about these things. I recalled Ganesh and Manoharan when I went recently to St James's, Piccadilly, to hear Dave Tomlinson talk about the "Post-Evangelical". This was billed as a way to enjoy the whole experience of the Gospel without worrying hugely about the truth of it all. Tomlinson comes from that great mill of movements made up of charismatics, house churches, Easter People, Green Belts, Spring Harvesters and the rest. It is an amazing confederation, which threatens and enriches the standard denominations about equally. These new movements clearly now have the strength to ask

faith & reason

The Rev John Kennedy this week asks whether a belief in God is enhanced by a commitment to His existence, and concludes that for many Evangelicals it is not.

some exciting questions. Tomlinson asks them very sharply indeed.

First, he remarks on that two-dimensional Evangelical personality with the smile on. Are they really like this all the time? Tomlinson wants people to be who they really are, which is why he gathers them in the upstairs room at the Queen Alexandra on Clapham Common every Tuesday, in a conventicle called Holy Joe's.

Then, there is the demand for certainty. Tomlinson is clear that there is plenty of divine truth about, but almost no human certainty. He sometimes talks in post-postmodern terminology, but this puzzle has been with us since Descartes. The world is clearly a won-

derful place, and it's really there; but when you think about it, all that stays in place is the arithmetic in your head. And, God save us, the Bible is part of that infinitely complex and ambiguous world; so what certainty can there be, in heaven or in earth? Clearly, not a lot, but that's what being grown-up means. It is wonderfully refreshing to hear biblical literalism discussed as a rather barmy parody of modern rationalism.

That is a paraphrase of the intriguing stuff that Dave was giving out at St James's. Then a stout Anglican told us that he had solved these problems 30 years ago, and denounced us all as E. Some of us denounced him right back, arguing that the truth is sectarian, or it is nothing.

The point that Dave and Co have hit on is familiar enough in philosophical chatter, and on the arid shores of the Sea of Faith, but carries a new force in the Evangelical context. The argument seems to be like this. Anything that can be asserted entails the possibility of counter-assertion and qualification, unless the proposition is trivial. There is no final truth about anything, only versions of our stories, which compel by their ability to persuade.

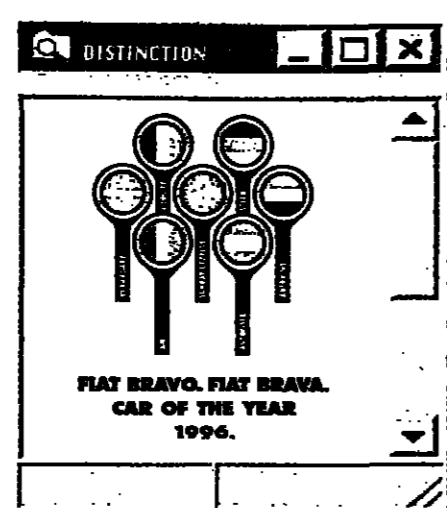
And their persuasive force is not inherent. It is derived from the tradition

that we have received, and from the creative talent that God's spirit endows us with. The harder we assert one thing to be the case, the more an infinity of distorting mirrors shows it to be otherwise, and a babel of mocking voices shouts the same. This, of course, is the rather ancient truth that lies behind the banalities of postmodernism. It gives us no terrible problems, until our version of the tale demands to assert itself over all the others - which is very much the Evangelical style.

The Post-Evangelical style is quite different. It admits that we have the treasure of truth in earthly vessels - the frail flesh and feeling of a lived life. The truth cannot be used as efficiently as we would like, and if we use it against one another, its power becomes diabolical. My friend Manoharan could not make Ganesh really real, and wouldn't try. Nor do the folk at Holy Joe's.

Post-Evangelicals seem to be people who trust in God, but who will not trust in prefabricated answers to ultimate questions. It remains to be seen whether this phenomenon is merely an irritant upon the body of Evangelical confidence, or whether it has a genuine transformative power. I suspect there are many fugitives from the Evangelical camp who would like to know.

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صكنا من الراجل

When Tories are capitalism's worst enemies

Is Alan Shearer worth £15m? The answer, if Sir John Hall and Kevin Keegan of Newcastle United FC think he is, is that is the price put on his skill. Another example: Winston Churchill MP. We may think him greedy and lacking in family pride but we have to accept he has something to sell – his grandfather's papers – and someone wants to buy. If the striking price is high, so be it. You can pick any number of instances from the City, entertainment, sports, even journalism. We may not think much of the beneficiaries of the transactions but as long as some skill, some spark of enterprise, some talent or some product is being sold, the "right" price is the price someone will pay in a real, unrigged market. In such cases, political intervention ends in mild oppression, embarrassment or tears.

The price for Porterbrook plc is wrong. Here were a group of British Rail employees plus some corporate middlemen who borrowed money to buy a set of earmarked assets. The risk was minimal, the element of skill negligible: no enterprise, no imagination, no innovation. All they needed to know was that they were sitting on top of millions of pounds' worth of rolling stock without which there would, literally, be no rail service. After six months of sitting, Stagecoach comes along and makes an offer

that pays off all of Porterbrook's borrowing and leaves £84m to spare. Eighty-four million pounds for what? For no exercise of talent, nothing foregone – they are getting money for the accident of being in the right place at the right time. (We recorded yesterday the chagrin of one employee who resigned a couple of months too early to share in the spoils.)

But let's be crystal clear why this transaction is wrong. If one leg of the case for privatisation was to bring in capital for investment in stock or improved service, ask what conceivable benefit to railways does this £84m profit represent – not a single extra carriage, not a single new engine, not a lick of paint on a wagon door. If another leg of the argument was about breaking up the rail industry for the sake of competition, what on earth is Stagecoach – already suspiciously strong in the provision of coach services ostensibly in competition with rail – doing buying up a train-leasing outfit? Wasn't the idea that service providers should be kept separate from owners of rolling stock? Next, presumably, we will see service operators taking over track; we will then be squarely back at stage one with a price-gouging monopoly, but with none of the benefits of nationwide integration that British Rail offered.

This sale and profit is bad for the national



interest in cost-effective transport, for the dangers it poses the railways. But it is bad, too, for the Tory party and not only for the way it exposes the short-term incoherence of Tory thinking about privatisation. It is especially bad for a party that prides itself on communing with the British public's highly developed sense of fairness.

There is in public opinion a deep strain that strictly assesses the worth of those who receive public money and assistance. That fact has now been recognised by Labour, which has, for example, been tailoring its benefits-to-work policy accordingly. The parties are now broadly agreed: people deserve social benefits only in proportion to their willingness and capacity to work.

But now here comes the Conservative government condoning a situation in which "deserve" does not figure. What is the worth of Sandy Anderson, managing director of Porterbrook plc, as he counts his millions? What the Conservatives fail to see is that we make judgements about fairness on a continuous basis; we do not apply different scales at different times. The small corruption of the benefits claimant who defrauds the state receives the same censure as the City slicker who cheats on his income or corporation tax.

What the Government is damaging is our underlying conviction that the "system" is

fair. By privatising in the way it has and now – failing to condemn failure and excess, ministers undermine their own capacity to stand as the guarantors for equity elsewhere. If the Tory state is such a milk cow, why shouldn't the self-employed, or housing benefit claimants behave accordingly and squeeze the teats until they are cracked and dry?

The public, by and large, applauds good fortune and just rewards. Self-made millionaires and rich inventors; well-off actors and entrepreneurs – they are all a cause for celebration. The National Lottery has been such a great success because people cheer when the wheel of chance spins and some lucky beggar walks away with millions. That is the outcome of a game we subscribe to every time we buy a ticket. But public money is not a game. Hard rests of desert ought to apply to those who get state handouts – and the ranks of those with their palms outstretched include the chairmen and chief executives of companies grown fat thanks to the underpricing of national assets. Capitalism may appear, after the demise of Communism, to be robust because unchallenged. But markets are only as effective as the belief that surrounds them. The Conservatives, ostensibly the party of the free market, are sometimes among its worst enemies.

LETTER from THE EDITOR

August is the cruellest month – as TS Eliot put it, before Ezra Pound got to him with the correcting fluid. In August, no journalists report to no readers on the activities of no politicians. In August, the most important people left in the country are John Prescott and Stephen Dorrell. In August, the streets of our great cities gather dust and our finance houses are windy ghost-towns. In August, no minister resigns, no royal toe is nibbled by a commoner, no supermodel is defrocked.

In August, things are unusual: we are our private selves. We dream of life without politics, life without fuss. And... what happens? While dreaming, perhaps on a distant Mediterranean beach, perhaps on Dorset shingle, we are suddenly shaken awake by a clean-limbed youth with crisp white shirt and a Mormon smile, thrusting a leaflet and hissing, "New Labour, New Britain." Squinting and angry, we sit up and see, further down the beach, Brian Mawhinney tackling a poster to an olive tree. Whatever next? Ian Paisley in St Tropez? Dennis Skinner tramping the tattered streets of Umbria?

Have these people no shame, no sense of national tradition? I suggest that unless the parties withdraw their lunatic schemes for seaside August campaigns, we should arise, as a free and frolicking people, and pledge ourselves to vote for none of the above.

The case of the frozen embryos, which we report on again today on page one, is not only one of the sharpest examples of the moral dilemmas raised by advancing technologies; it is also a good example of how our language comes under pressure when confronted with new problems. Trying to write a headline about this the other day, I was confronted by words such as "orphan", "killed", "parents" and "left to die". These are strong, familiar words and their cumulative use has the effect of nudging any but the strongest mind against the destruction of the embryos. This is before the words of campaigners, including "massacre", "holocaust" and so on, are taken into account. There are rival words, which help remove the emotional effect, such as

"cell-cluster", "potential" and "disposal" but they are, well, clinical. We have had, of course, powerful letters on both sides; but the letters protesting against the destruction of the embryos are more powerfully written. So they should be: they are drawing on a much more powerful verbal ammunition-dump.

But isn't it interesting that so much human passion is expended on the fate of tiny groups of cells, compared with the fate of fully developed children in poverty, never mind other, more hopeless poverty? Isn't there a perverse hierarchy of compassion here, which places cell-clusters at the top of the moral agenda, then struggling ordinary children below them, and then – far below both – immiserated adults? (When

Isn't there a perverse hierarchy of compassion here, that places cell clusters at the top of the moral agenda?

come to think of it, did children begin to be considered more worthy of pity than adults, and why – was it Dickens?) At any rate, if there is something perverse here, then it is deeply rooted in our language and our emotional responses to words. And these are some of the deepest social roots we have; what seems to be a trivial struggle about a headline touches the future of the long-fingered bipeds as a whole.

Another thing about August, of course, is that schools and universities are empty. Given that bipeds are innately keen on learning, we have devised a short course to keep education-starved readers happy. From Monday, we begin "The DIY University" – our instant course in Everything Important, which ranges from Einstein to quantum mechanics – Chomsky to classical painting – Groucho Marx to epistemology.

It's something different for the patio or beach. And useful, perhaps, for swatting away the mendicant politicians.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

We spend our time trying to create life, and now we are being asked to destroy it – Dr Peter Bronwich, fertility specialist, on the destruction of thousands of "orphaned" embryos.

I'm innocent. I didn't do it – Richard Jewell, the 33-year-old security guard who first reported finding the knapsack bomb that exploded at the Atlanta Olympics. He has become a leading suspect.

She could sing like an angel in the choir, tackle like Paul Ince on the football field and go up and down stairs in between like Sally Gunnell on a training run. Just to watch her made you tired, and she loved every minute – Bob Branch, headmaster, at the funeral of Jude Matthews, nine, who was found battered to death on a railway line in Boodle, Merseyside.

I like it. We won, the end. Leadership. America. Good over evil – Bob Dole, Republican presidential contender, after seeing the summer's blockbuster film, "Independence Day".

She would be turned away at the bar. She's a woman first, remember, and Queen second – Terry Wogan, on London's male-only Garrick Club, which has invited the Queen to visit.

Oh God. It's too long a life. I am tired... Give me instant death – Sir Narayan Choudhury, 139, in an interview with the "Kathmandu Post" in his Himalayan village of Khanas Nepal.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gun control: the need for rational debate

Sir: I am relieved that the Home Affairs Select Committee has voted against a total ban on handguns; appalling though the Dunblane massacre was, and wholly understandable though the views of parents such as Pamela Ross are ("Listen to me", 1 August), as a nation we simply must try to step back from the situation and attempt to assess it rationally before passing ill-conceived and unnecessary laws.

It is a sad fact that a ban on legally held handguns would in no way prevent another such incident occurring: viewed objectively, even a shotgun in the hands of Thomas Hamilton would have had a very similar result, and yet even those calling for severe restrictions on the possession of firearms are reluctant to control these weapons as well.

I am not a gun user myself, have no involvement in the field beyond academic study, and support no political group or party, but I can see that no legislation passed in haste and with a people still in shock has ever had its intended effect, no matter how well-intentioned –

rather, it is by rational debate and analysis that the appropriate laws are framed and in this case, effective and fair gun control is achieved, without over-reaction by either side. CHRISTOPHER M ROGERS Edgware, Middlesex

Sir: The item "Home Office challenges gun lobby evidence" (2 August) describes the Home Office paper which makes comparisons between gun-related crime rates in Britain and the United States.

If I felt that gun control would protect our children I would support it without hesitation, but to make this kind of global comparison overlooks the fact that gun control laws in the United States vary enormously from state to state.

I understand that in Washington DC, where the crime rate is extremely high, there already exists a ban on handguns as is proposed here, whereas in many states which allow gun ownership, gun-related crime is comparatively much lower.

Is it too much to ask for an objective analysis of the American

data which already exists so that simplistic, emotive and idealistic responses to this issue can be reduced? After all, at first view the American situation may suggest that our children may be more at risk, not less, if handgun ownership is made illegal. ALAN QUINN Macclesfield, Cheshire

Sir: It is a non sequitur to suggest, as Richard Balmer does (Letters, 2 August), that a ban on gun ownership is wrong because cars, kitchen knives and axes could also be banned using the same thinking. Although the latter three can all be misused, their main functions are travel, onion-chopping and tree-felling, respectively. The sole purpose of a gun, however, is to fire a bullet (whether in sport or in anger), something that need not, and should not, be integral to any citizen's life. If a minority of people need to find a new hobby, then so be it. AMOS MILLER London W12

Turkey has a part to play in the international community

Sir: For too long, Turkey has been marginalised and marginalised by the international community, which has failed to understand what Turkey is really about ("The Turkish question", 30 July).

Britain and the US have sought to be more constructive in building a relationship with a country that desperately wants to be democratic, wants to be accepted and to be understood. However, this constructive approach is still too tentative, too arm's length. The challenge and opportunity for the West is to engage Turkey as a friend and as a country which can bring benefit to the international community.

This is not to condone or ignore human rights abuses, nor the country's faltering economy and the political state. However, these deficiencies will be rectified more quickly if the West accepts Turkey as a partner for greater good.

Abuses and policy errors should be seen in the context of a Turkey that has a modern constitution, holds regular elections and which wants to be a modern, economically successful country and a valued member part of the international community.

It is a sign of the strength of Turkey's democratic instincts that a predominantly secular society can endure months of unstable coalition and then elect the Islamic Welfare Party into office, which has just renewed Turkey's commitment to Operation Provide Comfort in support of Kurds in Northern Iraq.

The country is a member of the Council of Europe, a strategically vital member of Nato, has applied for membership of the EU and has favourable trading arrangements with EU countries. As such, it deserves to be treated as a "grown-up" member of the international community and to receive a greater investment of time and understanding. EDWARD C FURNELL London SW11

Sir: Tony Barber's description of Turkey as a democracy needs serious qualification. Many thousands have been arbitrarily arrested and tortured. The press is restricted in what it may say, and those who offend the state risk punishment.

Over the past five years at least 29 journalists have been assassinated for their temerity, hundreds of others arrested, and many tortured. Hundreds of other political activists have either been killed or simply "disappeared", mutilated bodies appearing weeks later or never.

No one can hold the PKK guilty in the miseries of south-east Turkey, but your readers may not be aware that the state has rendered 3,000 villages uninhabitable over the past four years, leaving almost 3 million villagers destitute, to survive as best they may. Imagine for a moment such things happening in a member state of the European Union.

Nothing is likely to change until Turkey's major trading partners, the US and leading EU members, recognise that the most serious issue facing Turkey's future is one of fundamental rights, and that it must be helped to face and solve this question. That requires a frank and constructive initiative, not its avoidance, as so often happens, as if it were an embarrassment to the jollier business of trade. DAVID McDOWALL Richmond, Surrey

Sir: Your leading article (27 July), on Lord Woolf's final report, did lawyers and the Law Society a serious injustice.

Both the Law Society and the Bar Council and very many individual lawyers from both professions have provided considerable support to Lord Woolf and his team in the last two years and have welcomed the main thrust of his proposals.

The profession knows very well that the interests of clients must come first and that changes which will make access to the civil justice system easier and achieve results in cases more quickly and cheaply, are both necessary and to be welcomed.

Many firms of solicitors are already operating in a streamlined, client-oriented way in their litigation practices and many, too, are encouraging clients in appropriate cases to use mediation, arbitration, ombudsmen and other ADR routes to settle their disputes.

Lord Woolf is particularly concerned to enable ordinary citizens and small businesses to have an affordable, speedy and fair chance of pursuing or defending a

claim, even against well-resourced opponents. The system of fixed costs on the fast track could play a major part in achieving this, provided those fixed costs are set at a fair and workable level, after proper piloting and testing of the new procedures.

If Lord Woolf is right and much of the fear of litigation, especially exposure to uncertain costs, is removed, his reforms could well produce more work for lawyers. This is already happening in personal injury and insolvency work, following the introduction of conditional fees a year ago. In Germany, where a fixed costs system has been operating for many years and many citizens have legal expenses insurance, the amount of litigation per head is seven times that of this country.

Solicitors should view the new post-Woolf litigation landscape positively as an opportunity to offer clients a better service. TONY GIRLING President The Law Society London WC2

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Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 6DL. (Fax 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.



The *Amorphophallus titanum*, at Kew Gardens Peter Macdiarmid

Memories of a smelly floral giant

Sir: News that *Amorphophallus titanum* was about to bloom at Kew Gardens (report, 30 July) reminded me of when I first heard of the world's largest flower, from a man who assisted at a similar flowering in the late 1930s.

His name was Truman Fossum, and he was born in Minot, North Dakota. After studying at Kew and a number of US universities, Truman went to work at the botanical gardens in New York City, where a *titan arum* corm smuggled out of Sumatra was induced to bloom. One of Truman's chores was to escort elderly patrons of the botanical

gardens who wanted to see the smelly floral giant up close. The promoters of the 1939 New York World's Fair were so impressed by *titan arum* that they had a replica made of rubber that pneumatically opened and closed on demand.

Truman later worked for the US Department of Agriculture and other organisations, in a long, distinguished career devoted to horticultural statistics. He died a few years ago, but would have been pleased to hear of the flowering at Kew, where he was very proud to have studied. RONALD ODGERS Carlton, Yorkshire

Communing with nature vs GCSEs

Sir: Imagine being an ordinary kid from, say, inner-city Hackney or Moss Side, trying to explain away your lack of GCSE passes to a potential employer by saying, "Actually, I was wandering through woods, communing with nature... passionately following interests" (report, 30 July). You'd be consigned to the dole queue for a very long time, if not for life.

There are geniuses like Yehudi Menuhin, of course, who are exceptions in every way. Yet someone taught even the young Yehudi to read and to write, and someone inspired in him a passion for self-instruction. Most people have to rely on school teachers to do this, and teachers certainly get universally criticised if they fail to deliver what, according to your article, only parents with "enormous dedication" will do. STELLA O'SHEA London N8

Vermin from Venus

Sir: Regarding infestation from outer space, the theory is both older, by at least two decades, and more extreme, than Professor Sir Fred Hoyle and Professor N C Wickramasinghe acknowledge (letter, 1 August).

In *Worlds in Collision*, published in 1950, Immanuel Velikovsky wrote: "The question arises whether or not the comet Venus infested the earth with vermin which it may have carried in its trailing atmosphere in the form of larvae..." STEPHEN SENN Harpenden Hertfordshire

Energy Act

Sir: Your list of new parliamentary Acts is incomplete (report, 26 July). The 1996 Energy Conservation Bill completed its parliamentary procedure, and awaits royal assent.

Unusually it was sponsored by a Labour MP (Alan Simpson), and was (equally unusually) for a successful Private Member's Bill) not originated by the Government. It extends the 1995 Home Energy Conservation Act – again a genuine Private Member's initiative – to give local authorities duties to create plans to cut fuel consumption by 30 per cent for those living in homes in multiple occupation and on house boats. ANDREW WARREN Director Association for the Conservation of Energy London N1

the saturday story

Mullingar: a singular place

Old Ireland is fast disappearing and Mullingar, once a sleepy rural town, now bustles less than an hour from Dublin on speedy new roads. JP Donleavy savours its pleasures past and present

None of you sensitive in spirit will be glad to hear that the old Ireland has finally faded into history. But you can forget the fastest growing old places out there in the jungles of Africa and Brazil. Just go west of Dublin 50 miles as the crow flies and veer a few degrees north across the vastness of the Bog of Allen and you'll find the town of Mullingar — one of Europe's most alive and rapid-growing towns, through which once wove Slap Anse Lane, which would add at least one old fact you still don't know yet about James Joyce. For as the local literary detectives could tell you, this literary man who coined and spread world-wide the oft sung refrain "beef to the heels like a Mullingar heifer" went acourting as a youth up that lane whose name has been banished since.

However, the man James Joyce himself, may he rest in peace in Zurich, has been remembered, commemorated in a plaque high up on the town market hall, and a life-sized effigy of him was for a while ready to give silent response to questioners in the lobby of a fine hotel until last seen starting out at you from an upstairs window. But other things have happened to make this town suddenly different, and make it where all the action is. Like the old days in the west of America, when the tracks for a train go there, so did a lot of folk follow. So with by-passing stretches of new highway just built and speeding you there on wheels out of Dublin, and the door-to-door time now shrunk to under an hour, hasn't the place become, along with its spanking newly remodelled train station, the setting for a lifestyle that leaves little to be desired. Forget your St John's Wood and Beverly Hills. Mullingar has a burgeoning suburban sumptuosity to leave you stunned.

With nearly 1,000 houses a-building and no preservationists up in arms, it's all grow and go. BMWs and Daimlers race the country lanes. And a mere few miles away, its largest factory, Mergon International, in its sylvan setting of rural beauty, magically makes shapes and forms of plastic that go to every corner of the industri-



alised world. Germans, Japanese and Americans beat a path in their gleaming limousines to their door. And you guessed it, it's no longer Paddy and his pet pig or Seamus, drink taken, crumpled up in his cart and brought home snoring by moonlight by his trusted donkey from the pub. And didn't I recently overhear a sophisticated visitor say, what a beautiful name is Mullingar. And indeed it seems so to become.

But let's go back a little into the past, and listen to the litany of the facts already governing this place. Within a few miles are six loughs full of fish and one holding the record catch of a brown trout at 26lb, 2oz and still unsurpassed. And if its pike in all their voraciousness you're after, you'd find them not only in profusion under the lake water but in the pubs roundabout, stuffed monstrosities framed safely dead behind glass.

But there's another little bit of news on the subject of liter-

ature. When it was still a small conurbation and sleepy old town under the great soaring twin towers of its cathedral, Evelyn Waugh and John Betjeman snooped and hung around these environs. And none of your traffic was queued up at the traffic lights. Betjeman published a poem in the local paper and Waugh, while house hunting, stayed and signed a discreet small signature in the visitor's book of the very castle I am soon about to mention.

Now, except for being dignified by the previous listed literary gentlemen and maybe the best fox hunting in Europe, conspicuously free as it is of protesters, nobody has ever been rushing down to Westmeath to socially elevate themselves. But the news is loud and clear. As a county, it is no longer socially taboo.

In the wide streets where cattle were once brought to be bought and sold, fancy motor vehicles are parked side by side. And thundering by in

clouds of dust are lorries, one after the other, heaped high with the best of loam and lugged along on wheels taller than a man, gentleman drivers, sleeves rolled up, navigate their vast tonnage past gate posts with nary an inch to spare. And unlike the carefree days of Ireland's past, when wiping a stone pier off a landscape would be as common as a breeze taking a dead leaf off a tree, nary a brick on top of

you've got an overabundance of sensibilities and a botanical eye for beauty and having just finished breakfast with lashings of rashers and boiled eggs, now want to feast yourself further in contentment, either out on the flowing lawns or just viewing the grandeur from the window.

But now coming back into the days of democracy. If you're looking for culture happening of the highest order, you've found it. Mozart's *Don*

longer untouchably socially taboo here in old Mullingar. Wouldn't a celebrity or two in our midst make for an item of extra interest. Marianne Faithfull, famed songstress and author, has been whisked by her loyal driver Patsy Walsh down from her jewel of a cottage by the Liffey. The evening previous, Shaun Beary, son of the famed jockey and author, inventor of the currently best selling book "London's Good

James Joyce once took, across the great silence of the Bog of Allen, was on the train besieged for autographs. And didn't a local observer say, as Mr Clunes stepped down from his carriage and passed through the station, "Sure, don't excite yourselves unduly, that was nothing but a Martin Clunes look-alike, what would a big star the likes of him be doing in the flesh down here in Mullingar." Of course, Mr Clunes, besieged for autographs, was delighted to ever so briefly be let off the hook and loaded his large frame ever so relievedly into my car. To be later as himself be taken to Tullyally.

In our glad rags, it is to the neat village of Castlepollard we go, where once proclaimed a wonderful sign of practical simplicity which offered the services of both butcher and undertaker, now disappeared from sight. But onwards to the castle of the Pakenhams. The gates are ahead on a road straight as an arrow. And, as only in Ireland are such landscape contradictions possible, there the great grey edifice of Tullyally sits, snug in its valley and also on top of its windswept hill.

We arrive and stand on the latter to have our pictures taken. As my mansion is usually kept lunchless, Marianne is famished. She won't take another step of her marvellous legs without sustenance. Presto,

Coffee Shops", had arrived. We sat in Levinston Park's Green Room listening on my astonishing sound system recently installed by local Jerry Forde and you guessed it, a world-acknowledged expert in the field, and we listened in awe to Marianne Faithfull's recently recorded *20th Century Blues*. The repeat button pressed as one of the most exquisitely sung of songs — "Don't Forget Me" — filled this long chamber as we drank our VSOP brandy, a recent gift from the generously behaved Martin Clunes.

And this latter intrepid gentleman who struck out, not that long ago, bravely eschewing a helicopter to come by the train

Giovanni in all its glory performed by the Pimlico Opera has come to Tullyally on these two last evenings of July to sound its music within the curtilage of this famed castle. And upon its human element let us for a moment dwell. Pasha and Pasharee of this place, Tullyally Castle, are in fact a pair of brilliant authors, pulling their intellectual forelocks to no one. Distinguished in the literary world as Valerie and Thomas Pakenham, the former, Valerie, has long presided over the castle's restorations to make its labyrinth of halls and rooms useful and lived in and now reigns as hostess of this occasion. The latter, Thomas, known world-wide as the historian, is also a preservationist and an expert on the nature and beauty of trees. And no man is greater for fostering the exotic. His lilies border his lakes, streams and ponds. He provides pagodas in which to meditate and allow one's nostrils to discern the olfactory pleasure of the perfume of these rare blossoms. And to further attest to the spirit of this palatial place, black swans majestically parade their bright orange beaks on his landlocked waters.

And perhaps, is it now time to dare for one to say it and even suggest why one is no

Forget your St John's Wood and Beverly Hills. Mullingar has a burgeoning suburban sumptuosity to leave you stunned

the elegant silhouette of Shaun Beary vanishes nearby as he courteously fetches the picnic basket. A balmy breeze from the west, we walk on under a grey sky and wine poured, we go sit on a bench in front of the great door of Tullyally as the arriving audience streams by.

Within a large white marquee, chairman of this Deravaragh Music Association event, David Taylor, welcomes, and the treasure sought of the evening is revealed. Don't miss them wherever they go. The Pimlico Opera, clear and sweet, their excellent voices play out *Don Giovanni* with stunning timing and skill, the audience alive to every word they mouth and sing. Even as her feet grow chilled, Marianne remains rapt in attention. Flinching at the awful moments, laughing at the droll. And one realises as this naughty story of this opera unfolds that it could be told with equal significance in the headlines of tomorrow's tabloids. Singing the verities of life. Let love buy you your future. Or bury you along with your past. Forward with the rich and ignoble and give the meek and humble a kick up the arse.

Overlaid over. We retreat through hallways of the castle into an inner courtyard to the residence of Patrick Pilkington. And in this room, three little voluble children play. One of whom, the eldest at hardly more than five, was just as rapt as Marianne at the opera. Then a tiny black puppy dog makes a small neat deposit on the carpet. And the meticulous Patrick Pilkington has it shovelled up in a thrice. With my champagne, I go stand at a castle window. Stare out upon the parklands into the night where car doors are slamming, and headlights flashing awake their beams of white across the grass. Off they go. Home. Tail lights making a red twin thread snaking up the hill under the massive shadowy trees. And we know now that accounts told so that like Americans, everyone can become the common man. But here in this drawing room, still sound all those so polite precise vowels. Voices of yesteryear, or perhaps ghosts returned tonight to enjoy, as they did once, a great feast in this castle. Attended upon by the servants who once tread these great halls and summoned by the bells that still hang here silent but still ready to ring.

And so one proclaims a marvellous act of culture here to be seen. Brought forth by dedicated men and people whose lives rely on dignity, duty and calm behaviour. Out in the midlands. Mullingar the place. Mozart the music.

In America, they say have a nice day. And in Ireland, you can have a nice life. A nation from which so many fled, now crawling with its human race. Where ancient friends awake out of their deaths to shake a hand. And the brooding heavens carry their veils of rain to hide all her sins and keep her safe in her graces.

JP Donleavy — James Patrick — was born in 1926 in Brooklyn of Irish parents. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and is best known for 'The Ginger Man' (1955). Later novels include 'A Singular Man', 'The Beastly Beasts of Balhazar B' and 'The Destinies of Darcy Dancer'.



In paradise: Marianne Faithfull and JP Donleavy John Coggil

I find it very hard to separate sportsmen and women from the fantasy life they lead in the advertising world and their performance on the track. Carl Lewis has run on water and jumped over high buildings, finishing up on the Statue Of Liberty, because he is half man, half jym. Therefore, the long jump must be a piece of cake in comparison. Sour grapes about the pathetic crop of British medals? You bet.

So GCSEs and A-levels are easier, then. Or so says some recent report into the matter. Phew. I was beginning to wonder if I was going mad, when the experience of most people I know points to the fact that teenagers these days aren't quite the ticket in the brain department that we were. For the Tories, it has been easier to move the goalposts than provide a decent

Jo Brand's week

Carl Lewis? Give me a darts player any time

education system for every child. I know I mean on about this subject a lot, but the standard of heckling in comedy clubs has become ridiculously limited and I fear this is something to do with poor education.

I am not asking to be heckled in Latin, but occasionally a sentence would be nice or perhaps a word with more than one syllable would brighten the evening up. "F— off you, fat cow," as I

got (again) the other night shows a paucity of imagination and to my mind, a real drop in standards.

Hollywood is very fond of remaking films that were perfectly good the first time round, although it is unusual for them to take a children's film and make it something more to the taste of adults. Now *Snow White* is being given the grown-up treatment as our heroine gets stuck into

a more "adult" encounter with the prince, and the seven dwarfs include a child molester and a defrocked priest among them. Hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to find a choir boy we go, then.

I have often had my doubts about people who choose to work in the funeral service. Having been a nurse, I've heard some pretty horrendous stories about what people who work in morgues get up to. So it is perhaps inevitable that the first exclusively female funeral service has been set up this week in Somerset.

Martha's Funerals apparently caters for those women who do not want to be touched by men even after they've snuffed it. I suppose it depends on your view of the afterlife. You're not going to be there to get embarrassed about your bits being on show.

Once you've gone, you've gone; if someone gets a laugh out of my dead body, well at least they've had a laugh.

Every conceivable sport is heading towards inclusion in the Olympics at the moment. Snooker is being considered and now apparently darts players would like to be counted in, too. I am rather fond of darts players because they are the last "sportsmen" to resist the onslaught of the health and fashion lobby, preferring to lumber around bearing pints and fags in the most outrageous selection of shirts ever gathered in one venue.

I'm sure ancient Athens never witnessed a bunch of shellsuit-wearing, alo-swilling human sheds on legs firing their arrows at the wall. Or perhaps there just wasn't enough room to get them in on the vases.

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The Independent Weekend



You may want a 30-inch waist
But what about your cat?

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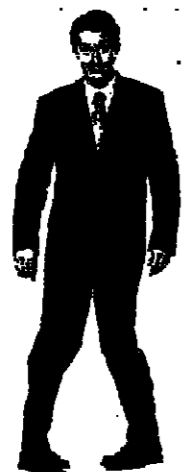
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March of
the Midas
messiah

Morris Cerullo. You've got to admire him. Well, maybe not admire: it's more the feeling of being face to face with a Komodo dragon. He holds thousands spellbound, shows them miracles, fills their bodies with electricity. Morris Cerullo parts people and their money with the ease of Moses parting the Red Sea.

The last time I attended Cerullo's Mission to London, which returns to Earl's Court Stadium on Monday, I saw a deaf and dumb girl cry "Haroorah!" I saw a woman with heart trouble do aerobics. I saw people drop their crutches and dance. It had to be true. They said it was. And you don't lie in the sight of God, do you?

As Cerullo brings his evangelical roadshow back to our shores, you've got to greet him with awe. He can conjure up money from nowhere. Never since have I seen so many poor people throw their last pennies into buckets. "Ask," says St Matthew, "and it shall be given to you." Morris Cerullo asks, and indeed they give. It's a miracle.

And there have been many more. In 1994, 8,000 circular letters invited recipients to experience Cerullo's Miracle of Debt Cancellation. "Lay your hands upon the Miracle of Debt Cancellation Reply. Let the anointing flow into your life... write down the amount you need to cancel all the debts in your life. Then act on your faith. Send your Miracle of Debt Cancellation Harvest Gift of £30, or more as the Holy Spirit will lead you." "Every debt you owe can be cancelled," the leaflet promised. The justification? II Kings 4:1-7, which is the story of Elisha, a widow and a multiplying pot of oil. Yes, and the Little People make shoes in the middle of the night, as well.

Camelot's Finger of God advertising is uncomfortably similar to this Prosperity Theology. Man may not live by bread alone (Matthew 4:4), but having several slices represents virtue, while poverty and illness indicate a lack of faith. Thus Morris and his preachers dress in fine-cut suits (Genesis 27:11. "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man") and proclaim that they, too, were afflicted until they found the Way. This is also one of the rallying cries of self-help gurus.

The flipside of self-help is Help Yourself. A huge industry revolves around the belief that giving someone money will transmit their Midas touch to the donor. And yet the majority of self-help gurus have made their millions purely from other peddling their opinions. And so with Cerullo. In 1993, the promise that £5 per soul would save the souls of family members was reputed to have raised £27m. Mailshots have asked devotees to give seven pounds each week for seven weeks for seven miracles: to hand over £49 to salvage his computer sys-

tem after Satanic sabotage. Five hundred years after Luther, his heirs are peddling indulgences. Father Kieran Conry, of the Catholic Media Service, while polite, is not keen. "The association of ministry and money is never a good thing. Simony is illegal within the Catholic Church." And miracles? "If they do happen at Lourdes, they don't happen at the intervention of an individual." Cerullo's followers would no doubt counter that Lourdes' recent record, compared with the 2,000 a week they claim, shows which approach works.

Damian Thompson, author of *The End of Time: Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium*, published by Sinclair Stevenson next month, says: "There is a powerful urge abroad to find something else. It's partly that old ways have been breaking down: family structures, politics, the established churches. People are looking for something that will bring about that miraculous transformation in the world. Religious fervour is common in times of crisis and insecurity. The New Age movement has the same traits." So: the market is out there. How do you tap it? First, pick your creed. Try to give something old a modern twist: age adds gravitas. New Age leaders love Buddhism, and the Druids; Self-Helpers quote Freud, Jung, Fromm and myriad psychologists. Then, once you've picked your slot, learn it inside out. "Cerullo's not an educated man," says Thompson, "but he's a smart one, and he knows his Bible."

Next, pick your target market - people who are depressed, stressed and longing for rescue are ideal. Studies pretty much prove that stress massively increases suggestibility. There are a lot of people out there ripe for the milking. Make the Bible your inspiration. Galatians, for instance: "Whoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" justifies a six-figure advertising budget. Be "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Isaiah 40:3) with full-page protest ads when the Advertising Standards Authority bans your poster campaigns, making you a victim of a cynical media and an unbelieving establishment. And above all, remember these words from Matthew: "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also"; or Genesis: "Ye shall eat from the fat of the land"; or Matthew again: "They presented unto him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh".

Tap into old superstitions. There's nothing more emotive. Numerology is great, especially combined with the book of Revelation: 666, the 10 nations of Europe, four plagues, seven angels; and that spitting exemplar, the Millennium. "It's very powerful," says Thompson. "A lot of the people who attend Cerullo believe we are at the End Time, that Armageddon is upon us: not necessarily in the year 2000, but soon. And because they feel that they will be raised above it all they're perfectly happy about it." Of course, he adds drily, "there's also that element of superiority."

Which leads us on to community. If your followers feel they are party to a secret, you're well away. Back it up with pressure to conform, to follow the party line. Encourage them to cut ties with old, sinful ways. Urge to leave or to question can thus be quelled by the fear of what to do next. While maintaining your status as leader, make sure everyone knows you've suffered like them. A bad past, like Cerullo's upbringing in a New York orphanage, beaten "with paddles", is useful. Put on shows of modesty: call yourself "This little Jew preacher" and other hair-shirt phrases. Your fol-

SERENA
MACKESY

In another life

lowers will feel that if they can be like you, they, too, can reap the benefits.

But most of all, give a good show. Mission to London spectaculars are top showmanship, brilliantly choreographed, with the emotional power of a big rock concert. 12 critic music, massive sound systems and 6,000 people displaying ecstatic joy can loosen the grip on your credit card. These techniques pump up stress levels, and stress can have amazing effects. Canadian neuroscientist Michael Persinger inhibited the production of stress levels with low-dose electrical charges applied to volunteers' heads. Resulting "visions" included God, Allah and the Devil. Dramatic religious conversions rarely accompany tranquility.

And so to the miracles. I once experienced something similar to the celebrated Toronto Blessing, which has people laughing, collapsing and crying all over the country. An osteopath pressed a spot in the base of my thumb and gave me the most incredible head-rush. I felt so happy and relaxed and grateful that I would have done pretty much anything for her.

And then there's hypnosis. Psychotherapist and hypnotherapist Anna Fenton says: "If someone's in the right frame of mind, touching them in the right way can be a powerful form of rapid trance induction. And in trance, as anyone who has watched Paul McKenna knows, all sorts of things can happen. Speaking in tongues would be just one of them." Damian Thompson agrees: "It's easy to make people fall over. If you push them in the middle of the forehead, they're expecting to fall over and know people are waiting to catch them, so they do." Slain in the Spirit or hit on the right nerve? The SAS kill with their bare hands, remember.

But showmanship - with shamans - is all, really. A large enough staff can manipulate any crowd. Morris has cohorts "helping" people up to the stage. Watch closely and spot the people "overlooked" in the rush: usually people who obviously need their crutches. Later, people crowd around the foot of the stage so Morris can "throw" the power at them. As invisible beams zip from his fingertips, waves of believers crash backwards. Have you ever been on a crowded escalator when someone tripped at the bottom? Same effect.

The thing is, the crowd themselves are lovely people. They exude faith and joy, offer help and sweetness. Miracles or no, many of them walk away with a spiritual uplift that helps them through their troubled lives. But healing? After the show I asked a member of the St John Ambulance Brigade how Missions compared with a normal day. "About the same, really," he said. "A bit busier. Loads of hyperventilation and the odd suspected heart attack. Oh, and there's always a big run on sprained ankles."

'If Buffy answers, just hang up,' he says. He may as well have added 'or she will kill you'

I remember the first time I saw her. We were at some dank, stuffy club, and tears were streaming from my eyes because of all the cigarette smoke. She was at the front of the bar queue, even though she was the shortest person in there. Her cropped copper hair looked like tiny flames licking at her forehead. A Stella in each hand, she pushed her way out of the crowd, squealing "Excuse me, excuse me," in a dinky Glasgow accent.

I tapped her on the shoulder. "Are you Buffy?" She gazed at me disdainfully. Later, she apologised. "It was just weird that you knew who I was. Like everyone in London is saying, 'Oh, there's that Scottish midget'." I knew who she was. Buffy is an old-fashioned "it" girl, like Twiggy and Drew Barrymore. Grace laughs and says, "What, like 'it' the killer clown in the

Stephen King book?" I giggle nervously and murmur "kind of". She might as well be. I have never been dumped before. Not by a girl. Not over a boy.

On her 21st birthday, I made her a Drew Barrymore collage. I had known her for about two weeks. "Why do you like her so much?" demanded Jon, one of those guys who prides himself on his understanding of the female psyche and gets his research by shagging a different girl every week. "Because she's as short as me and she hates all the same girls I do. Why do you like her so much?" He grinned. "Because she can take her drink. When girls are drunk, they either get all upset and cry or they get over-excited. She stays controlled." "Why haven't you tried to sleep with her?" "Because of what I just said."

Buffy never seemed like a real girl's

EMMA FORREST



girl. I remember her grimacing at the sight of my mates drunkenly cuddling and declaring their love for each other. "You and your middle-class lesbian friends," she sneered. The first sign of female camaraderie I saw from her was when she broke up with her boyfriend.

She rang me, weeping, from a phone box and said she couldn't face the office, so could she come over? I took the day off work to comfort her.

Her boyfriend is putting on a brave face. "I hate clever little tomboys. I'm only going to go with stupid tall people from now on." Around the same time, I split up with Steve, who Buffy works with. Except we didn't split up properly and, though we're not going out, we covertly keep seeing each other. This is about the third time it's happened and when Buffy found out, she went bananas. She considers all this to-ing and fro-ing supremely undignified, selfish on my part, bad for Steve and therefore bad for the office.

She stopped ringing me and then Grace bumped into her at a gig. "Where's your horrible flatmate? Tell her

to stay away from me. If she comes anywhere near me, I'll belt her." But Buffy, I'm not evil, I'm just indecisive. She doesn't know that because she won't take my calls.

The next week, I spotted her at a party. "Look, I'm just going to go up and ask how she is. What's she going to do?" Sally, a mutual friend, prone to overdramatics, begged me not to. "Please, no. I've just spoken to her and if you try to talk to her, something terrible is going to happen. Just stay away. I don't want you to get hurt."

I ask Steve if it's still all right to ring him at the office. "Yes, but if Buffy answers, just hang up." He may as well have added, "or she will kill you."

Saturday night and I accompany Steve to the club he's DJ-ing at. We get there before it opens so I have the whole place

to dance around in while Steve tests out how that Underworld remix sounds. I hate clubs. I don't get it. All that standing around, too cool to dance, records you don't want to hear. But obviously I just don't like other people because, until the club opens its doors, I am having the time of my life.

I go outside to get some air. That's when she turns up. What can I do, but say hello?

"All right, Buffy - how are you?" She looks over my shoulder and pushes straight past me. She still looks short as hell and cool as f***. But I am now just another one of those girls she hates. "You need to have a massive fight," says Grace, chewing on a slice of bacon. "Besides, you two fighting - it would look really funny." Come and have a go if you think you are short enough.

If Sir Teddy Taylor is elected to No 10, the walls will thump to the bass of Bob Marley

A publicity event took place the other day. That is, it wasn't actually an event at all, just a moment when the encompassing vapour of PR briefly coalesced into a visible nebula. And the visibility wasn't a by-product of some larger energy. It was the sole point. A large record store had decided to celebrate its birthday by commissioning a survey into the musical tastes of Britain's MPs, thus combining their own commercial desire for a name check with the incontinent eagerness of politicians to give out their opinions. And, whatever your feelings about the fact that 101 MPs have nothing better to do with their time than fill in questionnaires about their musical taste, the resulting document was irresistible. It wasn't that it was particularly surprising to find that classical music came top of the overall genre listings, or that dance music should figure high in

the Tory hit parade (the compilers add a useful footnote explaining that the term was understood by most respondents to refer to swing bands or ballet - thus destroying the enchanting vision of Sir Marcus Fox, a whistle clamped between his teeth as he frugs wildly to drum 'n' bass). But when it comes to more specific questions, the power of pop songs to encapsulate character is undeniable. This is hardly a novel discovery, of course - *Desen Island Discs* rests on the assumption that to choose is to confess, and above all to choose pop songs, which has long been one of the more socially hazardous exercises of taste. (It isn't absolutely unique in this - if you wish to admit a liking for certain films, in certain circles, you had better go armed with a package of defensive measures - "No, no ... it isn't kitsch ... it's about kitsch.") But pop music's brevity and promiscuity (it is always

THOMAS SUTCLIFFE



ready for action) means that it can insinuate itself into our private memories with particular ease. Add that to the way in which a remembered melody can carbon-date a recollection and you have the perfect emotional calendar. The point is well made in Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity* - a funny, wise novel about a man who measures out his

life in A-sides. Under emotional strain he rearranges his record collection: "Tonight ... I fancy something different, so I try to remember the order I bought them in: that way I hope to write my autobiography, without having to do anything like pick up a pen." In one of its questions the survey employs the same method, asking MPs to name the first record they bought. Naturally, one has to take this sort of thing with a pinch of salt, politicians being what they are. It seems more than likely that some will have edited history in favour of more respectable choices. The absence of Tony Blair from the respondents might, perhaps, be explained by the fact that his private office agonised for so long over the potential electoral liabilities of different pop songs that they eventually missed the deadline. But some of the answers could hardly be an invention. Anne

Widdicombe confesses to "All Kinds of Everything" by Dana, which strikes one as absolutely perfect - a secular sanctimony that would cause no unseemly disturbances at the youth club disco. Robin Corbett, Labour member for Birmingham, Erdington, saved his pennies for "Joe Hill" by Paul Robeson, presumably a big hit at Woodcraft Folk summer camps, while Charles Kennedy, with a precocious instinct for the middle ground, bought Simon and Garfunkel's *Greatest Hits* and *Tubular Bells*. The list of most recent purchases updates the picture: Anne Widdicombe is now getting on down to gregorian chant, while Charles Kennedy has just purchased George Michael's *Older* (no data available for Robin Corbett). The best question of all, though, is the most playful, in which MPs are asked to fantasise about the party that would follow their election as Prime Minister.

Some responses sniff of a trawl through the reference books - several MPs choose Alice Cooper's "Elected", for example, and Tina Turner's "Simply the Best" clearly makes it in for its title alone. Others are more mischievous, like Kevin Barron's selection of "I Lie For You and That's the Truth". But the party you would most like to attend is easy. If Sir Teddy Taylor is ever elected to Number 10, those venerable walls, he claims, will thump and pound to the steampress bass of Bob Marley (Sir Teddy's most recent purchase, incredibly, is said to be *Soul Almighty*). Behind the curtains, presumably, Sir Teddy and his cronies will sit in splendour, cradling sluffs the size of carrots (Commonwealth produce, naturally) and singing along with particularly raucous glee as Bob croons. "In a gubberment yard in Trenchtown". If it isn't true, it should be.

Baadasssss hustlers collect their Hollywood dues

Blaxploitation comes to the NFT. But, says Tom Dewe Mathews, there's more to these films than music, fashion, cheap sets and cheaper dialogue



Over one weekend in the middle of 1971 Hollywood discovered a new screen hero. A Manhattan movie house opened its doors on a Saturday afternoon for the first screening of a low-budget movie. The queue was about average for a first-time film. For the next showing the line was longer. By midnight on Sunday, the block on Broadway was twice circled by an eager crowd. The theatre management rang the studio: "What should we do?" "Stay open." So for three days and nights the movie was continuously screened. What those film-goers saw as the screen lit up was a lean moustachioed black man hopping along Manhattan's mid-town, and what they heard was Isaac Hayes singing "Who's the black private dick that's a sex machine to all the chicks? Shaft! Damn Right!" With *Shaft*, the "blaxploitation" movie had arrived, and with it - for the first time in a Hollywood-financed film - a tough, rebellious, sexually active black hero. Nowadays, blaxploitation movies conjure up a mixed memory of flash fashion, great music, cheap sets and even cheaper dialogue. In among the leopard-skin pimpmobiles, wide-brimmed hats and crushed velvet flares, garish gun-toting posters blazoned come-on lines like "Black Caesar" - the cat with 45 calibre claws, or "Watch out for Coffy. She'll cream you. She's got drive and that ain't jive." As for the actual dialogue, you didn't know whether to laugh or sigh when a film like *The Legend of Nigger Charley* opened with the alarm call, "Somebody warn the West. Nigger Charley ain't runnin' no more," or whether to peek through your hands when the presence of black sex siren Pam Grier was announced in *Foxy Brown* with the uncool couplet, "A pinch of sugar and a kiss of spice. And for an ace she keeps a cold steel 38 in a nice warm place." Yet, at the beginning of the blaxploitation cycle in 1971, the message was very different. Then, an unknown film made with a minuscule budget began with the bald statement, "Dedicated to all the Brothers and Sisters who have had enough of The Man."

Melvin Van Peebles's third film, *Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, is almost unknown in Britain - largely because it never gained foreign distribution. But Donald Bogle, who is curating the season of "Blaxploitation" movies that starts today at the National Film Theatre, describes Van Peebles's film as "an uncompromising, totally independent trail-blazer that heralded a new kind of black cinema, made its auteur a folk hero and inspired a later generation of African-American movie-makers". He also says that the film is "an open declaration of war on white America". Van Peebles himself explains why: "At that time, no kind of hero - let alone a black one - could defy the law and get away with it. But I had that idea and I wanted to turn it into a film for a black audience." The idea centred on Sweetback, a laconic, laid-back sex performer, played by Van Peebles, who "fights back" after he witnesses two corrupt white cops beating up on a black kid. Once he has wasted the two "honkies" - with their own handcuffs - the film follows its outlaw-hero through the back alleys of Los Angeles into a series of sexual escapades and escape sequences until Sweetback flees over the Mexican border leaving behind the legend - "A BAADASSSSS NIGGER IS COMING BACK TO COLLECT SOME DUES".

A young black American audience lapped it up, spending \$10m to see the film in its first year of distribution. But the *New York Times* was outraged by what it called "an absolutely mindless and dirty political exploitation film". More importantly, even before the film was made, Van Peebles's studio at Columbia also lent themselves to alarm. "They wanted to disassociate themselves as rapidly and as far as possible," Van Peebles remembers. "When I showed the script to my agent he left me, saying, 'I can't be associated with anything like this.'"

For a director who replies to the question, "How did you get to the top?" with "Nobody let me in at the bottom", a refusal from Hollywood amounted to an incentive. Starting out under the pretense of making a porn movie "over the weekend", Van Peebles avoided union rules, leveraged equipment and lab processing with a nudge and a chuckle that "this little movie will pacify my sweetie", and then shot *Sweetback* over a gruelling 19 day-and-night schedule. And when only two cinemas would show the resulting film, the director went out to black churches, schools and community halls - "anything to get a black audience". He wrote a hit tune so that he could get on to black radio shows and after the Motion Picture Association of America slapped an "X" on *Sweetback* - which meant that no newspaper would advertise or review it - Van Peebles had posters put up that were stamped across with "Rated 'X' by an all-White Jury".

"In the best sense of the word," says Donald Bogle, "Van Peebles is the director as hustler, and I think that's what made him a hero for the later generation of African-American filmmakers like Spike Lee. They learnt from Van Peebles how to encourage controversy, then to get good press coverage from that in order to reach as wide an audience as possible." Understandably, Van Peebles balks at the term "blaxploitation". "Nobody exploited me," he insists. "When *Sweetback* became a huge success, Hollywood began to make imitations." He then reveals: "Originally, *Shaft*, which was the first one, was going to be played by a white guy. So when they saw that black movies could become big business, Hollywood simply turned John Shaft into a black guy, added a few 'mother-fucks' and then brought the movie out."

If Van Peebles believes that his message was "diluted" by blaxploitation, the director of *Shaft* is equally insistent that he "wasn't trying to make a message movie. I wanted to make a good solid thriller." Certainly, Gordon Parks Sr had the credentials not only to deliver a solid movie for his studio at MGM, but also to direct a film that would remain true to its roots in the streets of New York. A distinguished photographer who established his reputation at *Life* magazine with his pictures of black militants, Parks adapted his widely praised autobiographical novel *The Learning Tree* for Warner Bros in 1963, and when he converted the script into a film six years later, he became the first black man to direct a major American movie. *Shaft's* success in 1971 pulled MGM back from the brink of bankruptcy, and perhaps inspired by that example, Gordon Parks's son, Gordon Jr, directed the third big money maker of the blaxploitation cycle - *Superfly*. With its tale of a coke-smorting dealer putting one over on "The Man" and boasting such lines as "S-track stereo, colour TV in every room and half a piece of dope every day. That's the American Dream," *Superfly* became an instant cult movie, grossing \$11m within two months of its release.

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PROMS

Bruckner; Schnittke
Rozhdestvensky / BBC SO
Royal Albert Hall, London

On Thursday, Kensington played host to a Prom of two halves. By Robert Cowan

Any performer capable of switching from the earnest architecture of Bruckner's Second Symphony to the brazen horseplay of Schnittke's *Dead Souls* must have courage to spare. And yet that's precisely the route that Gennady Rozhdestvensky took for his Thursday Prom with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Mid-way, Mrs Rozhdestvensky (Victoria Postnikova) made a lustrous statement of Stravinsky's *Capriccio*. Rozhdestvensky conducted his players hand-on-hip, rubbing his fingers at the strings or waving a throw-away cue to his wife; and when she took her bows, he stood there beaming and wiggling his baton. But then it was very much his night.

After Stravinsky, came Rozhdestvensky's own arrangement of Schnittke's 1983 score for a TV film based on Gogol's proto-avant-garde *Dead Souls*. Rozhdestvensky mounted the rostrum and turned the pages of a patchwork score before giving the sign for nine short movements, including a mysterious "Introduction" that recalled middle-period Bartok, a Prokofiev-style Polka, a Mahlerian Funeral March and a March-style fourth-movement that had both the orchestra and the audience in stitches. But that wasn't the half of it. "Plyushkin's Youth" saw Rozhdestvensky arranging two metronomes in synchopation, then physically disentangling a schmaltzy violin/cello duet, swooning to the pianist's romantic gestures (placing hand on heart and wiping away a mock tear), launching into an explosive Galop and inspecting his ranks like a military bandmaster. And the score? Pastiche peppered with irony, though it was the conductor who stole the show with a manner of miming that suggested a potential second career.

Rozhdestvensky has always been a staunch Brucknerian, having recorded most – if not all – of the symphonies back in Russia and developed a recognizably individual "Bruckner style". Thursday's account of the Second Symphony – an unfamiliar combination of editions – was temperate, detailed and occasionally mannered, a leisurely sketch rather than a grand vision. The work opens to a clear pulse that quite failed to register, but things did improve – in spite of a half-hearted lead trumpet and some loose ensemble work. The slow movement comes closer to Brahms than anything else in Bruckner, especially near the outset where there are audible similarities to the *German Requiem*. A touching though brief duet for flute and violin was especially memorable, while the Scherzo – a highly rumbustious affair – ricocheted loudly off the rear of the hall. As to the Finale, the less said the better. It's the sort of movement that, if it's going to work at all, demands total commitment. Rozhdestvensky's performance was patient and conscientious but ultimately unconvincing. Most of the orchestra looked bored out of their minds: no wonder they took to Schnittke's fun and games with such relish.

THEATRE The Red Balloon, Olivier, RNT

No neat moral yarn, Anthony Clark's production is a humorous and haunting fable that will appeal to children and adults. By Paul Taylor



Balloon butting: Parisian crowds and the eponymous rubber hero

Photograph: Gautier Deblonde

Small children can be bracingly heartless. There was I, wrestling with a lump in my throat as a mysterious red balloon – which had paled up with Pascal, a lonely little Parisian boy – is murdered by the pack of school bullies and slowly deflates before his stricken gaze. Behind me, though, a young lad was wrestling with a sense of grievance. "But it hasn't gone bang!" he exclaimed in an aggrieved, loud whisper. He'd had preferred a bang for his buck rather than all this sentiment. Do we believe in fairies? No, we don't pull her wings off.

Of course, the above spectacle is itself a reminder of the cruelty children are capable of. Watching Anthony Clark's musical stage version of Albert Lamorisse's short, largely wordless Fifties French film, I kept thinking: haven't we been here before recently at the National? Adult actors playing children: victimisation; the pack mentality. Substitute a squirrel for the balloon and it's Dennis Potter's *Blue Remembered Hills*. *Red Remembered Balloon*? That would be pushing it, perhaps, though Clark's adaptation leaves you in no doubt about the unloveliness of Pascal's contemporaries, as the gang chases him round the huge bridge, cantilevered out into the void, on Rauri Murchison's set. In a comically horrible touch, one of the more sadistic girls uses her large catapult as a diving rod for locating their prey. The two sticks, threaded with almost invisible strings, by which handler Malcolm Shields, controls the pushy, anarchic movements of the red balloon, also has the look, at times, of diving rods. At others, he seems like a double-batoned conductor – but always unob-

trusively. If this is a show that "bares the device", it does so without puncturing the illusion.

The haunting bits worked better for me than the comic business, and to judge from the laughter rate of my six-year-old assistant, that goes for her, too. The balloon's butting antics produce some mildly funny physical farce at the school with the beretted caretaker and nubile blonde-wigged teacher thrown by it into some Benny Hill-like situations. On the verbal front, the scene with Pascal's bickering parents in their no-pets rule flat relies heavily on children's Pavlovian delight at hearing the word "poo": "The cat's done a poo on the carpet."

It's in sequences such as the charming "Umbrella Song", in which Pascal seeks broly shelter for himself and his balloon from Parisians tripping in the rain, that the show achieves lift off. Mark Vibran's music isn't exactly bursting with inspiration, though it has a nice line in unforced poignancy. The pure, piping voice of the actress Nicky Adams, who plays Pascal with a moving earnestness and lack of self pity, does this handsome justice.

One good thing about the piece is that, unlike a lot of children's shows, it doesn't give you a neat doggy-bag moral to take home, or a physics lesson. What does the red balloon represent? What does it mean when Pascal is joined in his grief by all the balloons in Paris and lifted away into the air? Unlike balloons, these are questions you can pop again and again.

Tues, Thurs, Fri matinees to 30 Aug (0171-928 2252)

THEATRE

Decameron
The Gate, London

Robert Hanks on a flawed but graceful handling of Boccaccio

Ten stories a night, for 10 nights: it doesn't take a great mental effort to work out that staging the *Decameron* in one evening means either stooping to a kind of Reduced Boccaccio Company absurdity, or cutting the numbers drastically. The most obvious thing to do would be to present a representative selection of 10 tales, one from each night (since each night supposedly deals with a different topic). Nick Ward's version, the latest instalment in the Gate's "New Playwrights, Ancient Sources" season, resists the temptations to give us a statistical sample – he doesn't even give us 10 stories by my count, though it depends partly on what you count as a story. Instead, he presents a more thematically coherent compilation, taking Boccaccio's central topic, love, and setting it firmly – a tad too firmly – within its supposed context.

The context is plague-time: men and women who tell the stories have fled Florence to avoid infection. The way in which this is conveyed to you is effective enough, but crude: when you enter the theatre, you encounter a thick fog of dry ice; bodies lie in a long narrow pit that runs most of the length of the auditorium; a dark-robed figure stands in shadows at one end of the room. He opens the action by singing a "Kyrie"; bodies clamber up out of the pits; and, at this point, you feel yourself sinking into a big pit of cliché.

Fortunately, it's mostly uphill from here. There are still over-literal moments – the story of a woman being served her lover's heart for supper is illustrated by some *Galloping Gourmet*-style cookery, with real ingredients and a real stove – and you feel Ward's production could afford to go easier on the symbolism, particularly the sex/death juxtapositions. When a young man is murdered by his lover's brothers, they stab him in the groin with lots of pelvic thrusts, so it looks quite a lot like sex. Before he cuts the lover's heart out, the jealous husband delicately traces a circle around his victim's nipple with a knife (sexy!) – and the butchery involves lots of jerking around on top of the body, so that looks quite like sex, too.

It's hard to say, though, whether these intrusive moments are simply lapses, or whether they're a necessary counterpoint to the grace, narrative intricacy, hilarity and sheer beauty on display elsewhere: an on-stage shower is preceded by the perfect pastoral of a description of a walk through a green valley to bathe in a clear pool; the erotic tension of a chess-game between a lady and her undeclared lover dissolves into a kind of comedy thriller when he visits her in bed to find her husband already there. Stories are folded within stories; the excellent cast swap narratives around, shifting from narrating to being characters within the story (something that makes identifying them from the programme rather hard). This is clearly not a perfect "10", but there's richness in its imperfections.

To 17 Aug (0171-229 5387)

TELEVISION London Shouting / Only an Excuse (BBC2) A voice crying in the wilderness of the summer schedule, Alan Parker gives us truth, not lies. Presumably. By Jasper Rees

The silly season is television's rubbish tip. Programmes that can't find a place in the schedules at any other time of year are bulldozed into August and left to rot among the repeats: the busied-in mini-series, the season of documentaries about old age (honestly, there's one coming up), the stray dramas there's no other space for because Alan Yentob has over-commissioned.

It's also a time when comedy experimentalists get to cut teeth and edges. Last night, in *London Shouting*, it was the turn of Alan Parker, the soi-disant *Urban Warrior*, to argue the case for getting his own series. He's the brainchild – make that mouthchild, as there's no appreciable evidence of grey matter – of Simon Munnery, who plays him with gag-writing back-up from Graham

"Father Ted" Linehan. Parker is the pop-eyed descendant of Wolfe Smith, another hapless spouter of agitprop, but he's more paranoid and less certain of his ideological position. His radical mantra, as woolly as the lining of his bomber jacket, is "Truth".

Out of his confusion comes some enjoyable comedy. The setting is a studio with a live audience and all the latest gizmos. OK, a facts machine (sic). The first, and indeed only, message to spew out of it reads "Test Transmission Over". "Bad news for Test Transmission fans," Alan reckons, mournfully. That's the joke underpinning the entire show: that no one could be less suited to hosting their own pilot. When the *Super Furry Animals* (a real group, this time) have done their stuff, he takes his earplugs

out and says, "Great band. Presumably." Alan's purist stance on music is to listen to the Clash only.

There's not quite enough of this to go round, though. To plug in the holes, *London Shouting* polyfills itself with homages to other programmes. A report about a plague of danger-seekers in Burnley who leap off letter boxes looked uncannily like booty from a raid on the *Friday Night Armistice* ideas tray. The live links with a winking American bimbo, who's planning to spring a surprise on someone somewhere in Kent, sends up Katie Puckrick even higher than she sends up herself. And those studio events that somehow go wrong, leaving the host with egg on his face, could easily provoke a letter from Alan Partridge's solicitor. Parker is a much

more original comic idea than these steals allow him to be. He's too interesting to be merely someone else's guest, but misplaced as everybody else's host.

Another rummage through the schedulers' rubbish heap yields *Only an Excuse*, entirely devoted to impersonations of Scottish football folk. There was some pretty recherché stuff here, accessible only to Scots over the age of 50. Punchlines about Slim Jim Baxter, anyone? The take-off of Hugh McIlvanney, a Glaswegian metaphor-monger nostalgic for the poetry of the criminal classes. Not long now till the even sillier season begins. But while the mimicked are away, the mimics will play.



Alan Parker, Urban Warrior



KEY



overview

Mark Wigglesworth conducted two concerts with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in Brahms, Shostakovich, Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony, and John Pickard's *The Flight of Icarus*.

critical view

Adrian Jack admired his ability to inspire the orchestra. "Played not just with verve, but with polish." "The orchestra brought lucid imagination, lustre and vigour, spotlighting the instrumental colours," said the *Telegraph* of the Schoenberg. "An exciting lift-off," approved the *FT* of the Pickard. "Playing more confidently than ever under its new music director," commended the *Times*.

on view

As usual, both concerts were recorded by Radio 3. Watch out for a series on BBC TV of Mark Wigglesworth conducts.

our view

The Pickard piece was impressive but the Rachmaninov lacked bite. Is Wigglesworth doing too much?



THE FILM

JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

Rosel Dahl's first children's book reaches the screen in director Henry Selick's cross between live-action and stop-motion animation. Songs by Randy Newman, voice-overs by everyone including Susan Sarandon.

Adam Mars-Jones worried about the limp plot but praised "the pleasures it offers the eyes." "When it's good, it's very good indeed," decided the *Guardian*. "Surreal fantasy dazzling enough to lure adults as well as children," announced the *Times*. "A film of enchanting, at times ghoulish, appeal," smiled *Time Out*. "This glossy, bullying self-ingratiating unengaging entertainment," growled the *FT*.

79 minutes; Cart U: At the Odeon West End (0171-930 7615) and cinemas across the land.

"Aunt Spyley was thin as a wire And as dry as a bone only drier. Who plays her? Joanna Lumley. Go on... you know you want to."



THE EXHIBITION

DUTCH FLOWER PAINTING

Thirty paintings by 19 Dutch and Flemish masters from 1600-1750, from Bosch to Van Bruegel and De Heer to Van Huysum. The first exhibition ever devoted to the genre.

Andrew Graham-Dixon was awestruck. "Splendid, exhilarating and sexy." "People think 'they all look the same'." Dulwich conclusively disproves that," cheered the *Sunday Telegraph*. "This gorgeous show... heartbreakingly beautiful... glimpses of paradise," sighed the *Sunday Times*. "One becomes attuned to the nuances of floral art, and it all gets more interesting, and beautiful," remarked the *Telegraph*.

Dulwich Picture Gallery, until 29 Sept

Fascinating. Go, take your time and look on in wonderment.



THE ALBUM

SEX PISTOLS: FILTHY LUCRE LIVE

John Lydon forsook the Santa Monica sunshine to reform the Sex Pistols, the original and arguably greatest English punk band. A quick-turnaround live album of the Finsbury Park gig last month.

Andy Gill noted their sizzly aplomb. "Has myth ever distanced reality quite so brazenly? The Pistols have a great past ahead of them." "Anyone who feels in need of a souvenir might have a use for *Filthy Lucre Live*. Otherwise, it's completely redundant," scoffed the *Sunday Times*. "Actually very good indeed... as a live album, this is destined to rank among the classics," yelled the *Times*.

On CD, Virgin B41326

They've come for your money and they're getting away with it.



Hearing the horns of Elfland



Liverpool poet Adrian Henri explains how a chance encounter in a junk shop led to a lifelong obsession with Tennyson's poetry

Early October 1965: our annual field trip to North Wales with the first year students I was teaching at Liverpool College of Art, at a pre-war holiday camp for poor children from the city. On an afternoon break in Mold, the nearest town, I bought a second-hand *Collected Tennyson* from a stall outside a junk shop. Perhaps it was the autumnal countryside, perhaps the emotional turmoil of the end of a love affair and the beginning of another, but something chimed with my mood, the time and the place. The words sang and danced in my head:

All night has the casement jasmine stir'd
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon (*Maud*)

I had studied Fine Art, not English, was teaching art, and had only relatively recently begun to devote as much time to poetry as to painting. My self-education was wholly Modernist: Eliot, Pound, Mallarmé, Apollinaire, the Surrealists. Hadn't Theo de Wyzewa, spokesman for the French Symbolist school, famously declared "the aesthetic value of a work of art is always in direct inverse proportion to the number of people who can understand it"? But just as, when I was a student, I couldn't resist sneaking into the art galleries in Liverpool and Manchester to look at the Pre-Raphaelite paintings my tutors dismissed so airily, so lines from the Pre-Raphaelites' favourite poet, remembered from schooldays, would occasionally resonate in my head, like the voices of the Lotus Eaters, tired of their long Odyssey:

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass.

The chance rediscovery of Tennyson that day came to embody a whole series of paradoxes: for instance, wasn't he, at his most dreamily musical, the nearest British equivalent to the Symbolists?

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.
(*The Splendour Falls*)

And yet part of the fascination, for me, was that Tennyson was probably our last truly popular great poet: Betjeman, by contrast, was loved by the public but sneered at by academic critics, and his popularity in any case rested largely on his television films. Tennyson was Poet Laureate but he also lunched with the editor of *The Times* to discuss the progress of the Crimean War; had his work set to music and sung around countless pianos; had one of his books in every literate household; used to read out loud to his Sovereign; and, above all, was loved and quoted by thousands. In the early Sixties, my attitude to poetry was conditioned by a rejection of the reigning, backward-looking, Little England school known as The Movement - back-to-basics, Victorian-values Eurosceptics before their time - so I was deliberately using experimental and popular forms, like the blues and pop-song metres, rather than the traditional

forms they favoured. Simultaneously, however, I was aware that the Modernism that had been my solitary discovery in Rhyll Public Library had long left its audience behind. Wasn't there a way of opening out this narrow bridgehead onto a broad, popular front? The poetry reading seemed to be the answer, particularly with the regular weekly audience we had then in Liverpool. But hadn't Tennyson been famous for his poetry readings? And hadn't his enthusiasm for innovation led him to record on the new-fangled phonograph? What a tragedy it is that some idiot allowed the precious wax cylinders to melt and warp: from one brief hearing of these, despite all the problems, one feels he would put us all out of business as a reader of his verse, if he were around today. Perhaps poetry *could* be popular and good and innovative. Here, in this dusty, green-and-gold-bound volume, seemed to be the answer: yes, it could.

Innovative he certainly was. Reading "Maud" entire for the first time, not just the bit in the song that everyone knows, but the whole "Mondrama", I realised what a *tour de force*, what a demonstration of technical versatility was there. Delving further, I found the dialect poems, particularly the delightfully satirical "The Northern Farmer, New Style":

Doesn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canter away?
Property, property, property - that's what I 'ears 'em say.
Property, property, property - Sam, thou's an as for they pains

There's moor sense I 'one o' 'is legs nor in all they brains"
Tennyson seemed to be equally good at writing about public events: the charge of the Light Brigade; the arrival of Princess Alexandra; the opening of the Great Exhibition of 1851:

And, lo! the long laborious miles
Of Palace; lo! the giant sides,
rich in model and design;
Harvest-tool and husbandry,
Loom and wheel and engine...

and private grief, as in "In Memoriam". He could be as heartbreakingly simple as Housman - another, later discovery of mine:

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

And there is a passage in "Locksley Hall" that's as sensual as the *mores* of the time would allow.

Add to all this the ability to write stirring pieces like "The Revenge: a Ballad of the Fleer", and to construct, more or less single-handedly in poems like "The Lady of Shalott" and "Idylls of the King", that whole late-Victorian, neo-medieval world of Burne-Jones and William Morris and Co, and there emerges the supreme technician, the ultimate poetic all-rounder. I felt it on that rainy week in Colerendy Camp, and the feeling has only grown stronger since.

Of all the poems, "Maud" is the one I come back to most. Partly because of its extraordinary range of metres, forms and styles, but also because I have always felt that, beneath the apparent impersonality of the narrative, there was some sort of personal, emotional content, much as I had felt from the first about Eliot and *The Waste Land*. Later, when I read about the events of Tennyson's early life, I realised how close they were to the life of "Maud's" protagonist.



Tennyson: a chronic and frustrated fiancé

Photograph: The Mansell Collection

He was brought up in a remote vicarage; his father, embittered by the preferment of his younger brother to the family fortune, and the inadequacy of his stipend to maintain wife and children, took to drink, eventually breaking up the marriage. Tennyson's love for Rosa Barry, daughter of a wealthy farmer, was both unrequited and socially impossible: even his eventual marriage to Emily Sellwood was delayed for 14 years by doubts about his suitability. It was a kind of literal embodiment of Arthur Hughes's famous painting, *The Long Engagement*.

Now consider the narrator of "Maud": his father, ruined by the speculations of another, dies by his own hand; he falls for the daughter of his father's Nemesis, only to find that his lowly social status prevents their attaining the life

together they both dream of; his frustrated rage at this leads to a series of disastrous, precipitate actions that mean he must leave his country, and Maud, for ever. The poem ranges in mood from the appalled, almost horrific beginning:

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red blood.
The red-rib'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood.
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death'.

To the ecstatic invocation of the awaited lover, following the oft-quoted song lyric:

She is coming, my own, my sweet:
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an early bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead.

Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

When my first poems were published in book form some years later, quotations from Tennyson had found their way into several of them. This year saw the first performance of "Lowlands Away", Richard Gordon-Smith's settings of new poems by me for soloists, choir and orchestra. When the composer asked me to "write him a storm", it seemed perfectly natural to start and finish with a set of variations on "Break, Break, Break". Tennyson has been part of my mental landscape, in a way few others are, ever since that day in 1965.

Adrian Henri presents an abridged version of this article in "Poetry Please", on BBC Radio Four, Sunday, 4 August

In the groove with Gus Garbage

DJ Taylor gets down and boogies with a Mancunian rock saga

From Joy Division to New Order: The Factory Story by Mick Middles, Virgin, £12.99

The story of Factory, arguably the most influential independent record label of the early 1980s, started 10 years earlier when a precocious young television journalist named Anthony H ("Tony") Wilson returned to his native Manchester to take up a presenter's job on *Granada Reports*. Personable, telegenic and fixated on late-Sixties punk rock of the Lou Reed/iggy Pop variety, Wilson soon persuaded his bosses to underwrite a late-night young persons' music show. So *It Goes* broke upon the TV screens of the north-west in early 1976.

Wilson's initial problem, as the programme's early critics obligingly pointed out, was a dearth of home-grown talent. The mid-Seventies, famously, were the years of "progressive rock" - dry ice, castrati vocals and men with beards crouching over synthesizers - when the snappiest compliment you could apply to a record was that it was "well produced". Happily by mid-1976 the times had begun to change - and begun to change smack in the middle of Manchester, where a couple of students named Pete Shelley and Howard Devoto had contrived to stage the first Sex Pistols concert outside London. At a return gig a month later, Shelley and Devoto's band, Buzzcocks, were the support act. For the first time since the Merseybeat boom, Manchester was a groovy scene.

In Wilson the Manchester scene found its Svengali. Supposedly enflamed by a puzzled accountant ("everyone else I know in the music



Surprised by Joy Division: Ian Curtis and his band, 1977

business makes a fortune, Mr Wilson...") he began in a small way, hosting a Friday night "experience" in an indescribably sleazy venue called the Russell Club. Factory Records, following shortly afterwards, featured an anorexic guitar genius named Vini Reilly, and a gang of Salford desperadoes with a tortured-sounding singer trading under the unpromising sobriquet of Joy Division.

The rest, perhaps, you know. Within a year Joy Division were the most critically admired band in England. Within two years, the tortured-sounding singer, Ian Curtis, having hanged himself just prior to the release of their second album *Closer*, they were a rock legend

with an intensely lucrative back catalogue to exploit.

Amazingly, as the long-time Factory observer Mick Middles demonstrates, Wilson's luck held. Joy Division metamorphosed into New Order: "Blue Monday", an hypnotic dirge from the early Eighties, became one of the decade's best-selling singles. In the meantime Wilson had bought a deserted yacht marina and converted it into a style palace called the Hacienda. Not long after this he turned up the bunch of drug-crazed Manchester hooligans whom history remembers as the Happy Mondays. It couldn't last. High interest rates and the property slump sent the value of the Factory portfolio tumbling. The

Moss Side drug gangs had the Hacienda closed by the police. Sent to Barbados to make an album, the Happy Mondays went out of their heads on white powder and ran up a £2m recording bill. By 1992 the receivers were in, the groups were being asset-stripped by major labels and Factory directors were left to contemplate the cost of a decade's profligacy.

Most of the enduring features of English pop are lavishly revealed in *The Factory Story*: its mercurial "businessmen", high ideals, low cunning, impassioned guitarists with names like Gus Garbage, its fiscal absurdities. But it must be said that Mick Middles, who writes entertainingly and has the chronic pop obsessive's take on all this bygone marginalia, has put his name to the worst edited book I have read in years. Check out "decrepid", "portentious", "miniscule"; "comprised of", "mooted" (for "muted").

Middles himself appears not to know the meaning of the words "ubiquitous" and "infamous" and enjoys a particularly ghastly was/s stylistic flourish. Thus X (the Vomit Club/guitarist Sid Spunker) was, and indeed still is... (a cocaine dealer's paradise/ unable to play three chords) etc. But for all these disfiguring drawbacks, this is still a hugely enjoyable rock chronicle, full of bleak insights into the fleeting subterranean world of late-Seventies Manchester and more revealing on the subject of why and how people play rock 'n' roll than many a more elevated tome.

Of exile and oral sex

Lachlan Mackinnon celebrates an underrated poetic original

Selected Poems 1933-1993 by Gavin Ewart, Hutchinson, £9.99

Gavin Ewart died last year at the age of 79. His first collection, *Poems and Songs*, appeared in 1938, when he was 22, but there was a long hiatus before *Londoners* (1964). From then on, he became one of the most copious poets of his time: his *Collected Poems*, now shamefully out of print, filled two thick volumes.

Ewart was famously and splendidly ribald, as he showed in making this *Selected Poems* before he died. "The Tart of the Lower Sixth", for instance, has the memorable line, "The whole of the choir (Sings of me and of my oral sex)". However, too much was made of this aspect in his lifetime, to the disadvantage of his serious work.

In "The Hut", Ewart remembers a sister who died. At night, he sees the shed where she used to paint, remembers details of her life, and then the last stanza reads:

The friends and sisters got, and all who had in that past smiled
(and some had beauty, some were bright with wit)
must forfeit health and come to this one room
as dark with memory as a Victorian tomb,
and we must wrestle with understanding it
until from life and hope we are called.

The kick is in the last word, where the mellifluous rhyming suddenly breaks down because our voices naturally emphasise the first rather than the second syllable. The open vowels set



Ewart: splendidly ribald

against each other make a catch in the throat which picks the word "exiled" out so that its full finality becomes clear.

This kind of detailed technical analysis is particularly worth doing with Ewart because it is so easy to be misled by the sheer boisterousness of his gift. There are poems in Lallans and Latin here, parodies, rewritings of famous poems into modern idioms, squibs, epigrams and elegies. Only Ewart would think of describing his own Scottishness as "Like Robert Louis Stevenson living in Samoa, like George MacBeth living in Sheffield, like Ian Brady living in Greater Manchester". Only Ewart could have written "A Pindaric Ode on the Occasion of the Third Test Match Between England and Australia. Played at Headingley, -

16-21 July, 1981", a "dithyrambic doggerel".

"He's very popular among his mates", Ewart wrote in "Seamus Heaney". "I think I'm Auden. He thinks he's Yeats." Auden's influence is transparent in Ewart's concern with formal variety and his disregard for the distinction between light and serious verse. Ewart acknowledged the debt frequently. However, the inclusion here of "I.M. Anthony Blunt" makes something else clear: "It's sad you were shaken by a maverick clever buccaneer like Guy".

The chatty reference to Burgess and the sense of "time past" remind us how much Ewart remained a Thirties humanist, deeply sceptical about the world of business and advertising (in which he worked), deeply concerned with social injustice. The light-hearted scurrility for which he was renowned was motivated by a desire to liberate. It did not deflect him from writing a terrifying masterpiece like "The Gentle Sex" (1974).

This poem deals with violence between women in Northern Ireland. Too long to quote, it cries out to be read, an account of horror written by a man of unrelenting human decency. Like much in this selection, it goes to show how much more Gavin Ewart had to offer than the comic writing for which he was acclaimed.

All you need to
know about
the books you
meant to read



THE AENEID by Virgil (198C)

Plot: An epic poem in hexameters that ostensibly salutes the achievements of Rome and its emperor. It tells the story of Augustus's mythic forebear, the Trojan Aeneas. Troy is destroyed and for seven years Aeneas has been struggling to reach Italy and complete his destiny. The ships leave Sicily but are blown off course by Juno. Aeneas lands near Carthage and is greeted by the widowed Queen Dido who he entertains with edited highlights of his sub-Odyssean wanderings. Dido finds Aeneas's seduction technique irresistible. There is a hunt, a storm and a marriage. But Jupiter reminds Aeneas that it is his duty to become the founding father of a great people, the Romans. Aeneas scarpers. Dido is furious and pours curses on the Trojans. She then immolates herself on a funeral pyre. Aeneas visits the Underworld and sees Dido in the distance, but she turns away from her former love. Aeneas arrives in Italy where Latinus, King of Latium, follows the prophecy and betrothes his daughter to the handsome stranger. This angers her suitor Turnus, hot-headed King of Rutulians and civil war breaks out. Eventually Aeneas and Turnus meet in single combat. Aeneas overcomes the king but decides to spare him until he notices Turnus sporting the armour of Pallas Athene. In a tantrum, Aeneas kills his opponent and thus the poem ends with an act of spiteful violence.

Theme: Aeneas is bound on a wheel of duty. As a result, he loses Dido but gains a war and a young girl he doesn't really want. Imperial conquest is shown as exacting ferocious personal sacrifices and Aeneas is equally protagonist and victim.

Style: The verse is compact with each word working hard. Virgil's temperament turns the heroic to elegiac, the tragic to pathetic. Dryden's translation is a neo-classical masterpiece.

Chief Strengths: In a supreme work of literary art, Virgil recognises the unimportance of refined culture for the Roman mind. Rome's job is "to rule mankind and make the world obey".

Chief Weaknesses: Virgil's penchant for beautiful young men expiring in edifying ways. This contrasts with most of the women, who tend to evolve into haridians.

What they thought of it then: It was unfinished at the time of Virgil's final illness. He wanted it destroyed. Saved from the flames, it became an instant classic.

What we think of it now: Virgil's aversion to imperialism is over-emphasised. Whatever the poem's ambiguities, it still asserts the virtues of piety, duty and proper drainage.

Responsible for: Homer vanished in the Dark Ages but Virgil survived. He influenced everyone from Chaucer and Dante to Franciscan.

It Was An Accident ...

Last week's review by Nicholas Wroe, "Bringing the Ashes to the Bone" was of Nik Cohn's "funny, overwrought and ultimately triumphant" "Need" (Secker, £14.99).

The Devil at work in the dark woods

Miranda Seymour reads a disturbing account of the consequences of Puritan hysteria in 1692

A delusion of Satan" was the phrase by which Ann Putnam, in 1706, tried to explain away the madness which took place in Salem Village, Massachusetts, in 1692 and which led to the hanging of 19 innocent people. Ann, as the ringleader of the girls whose alarmingly persuasive fits and visions led to the destruction of their enclosed society, had a deal of explaining to do.

Nothing which happened in Salem Village could equal the dreadfulness of the persecution of witches in Europe during the 17th century. (Two boys in southern Germany were compelled to watch their mother being burned while her severed breasts were used to gag their cries.) In England, the worst of the witch-hunting was over by the 1670s. But Salem was part of a new and fearful puritanical society which invoked the death penalty for blasphemy and even for rebellious behaviour among children. In a village surrounded by dark woods from which, in recent history, the Indians had emerged to massacre householders and destroy their homes, the devil could be discovered in a sideways glance or an idle curse. If a cow died or a child sickened, it was assumed that the devil had been at work.

The Crucible, Arthur Miller's version of the Salem witch-hunt, created a love story of sorts by focusing on prosperous John Proctor, the tavern-keeper, his accused wife and Abigail Williams, the serving-girl who lived with them and who was in love with her employer. The true story was, in some respects, worse. Abigail, an 11-year-old, was the niece of Salem's minister, Samuel Parris. It was in his house that the visions and fits began and the first and most determined persecutor of the "witches" was the minister himself.

The trouble began in late January, 1692. By February, the minister's Caribbean servant, Tituba, had saved herself from prison by giving an imaginative account of her own witchcraft. (One of the cruellest ironies of the witch trials was that those who confessed went free.) By March, Ann Putnam had become the leader of the "afflicted" girls, privileged to see witches wherever they looked. Her parents reinforced Ann's claims. The Putnams, as all historians of the trials have observed, were a family who seem to have had a private vendetta to do with ancient grudges and the coveting of their neighbours' property. The discovery of witches allowed them to deploy their venom with enthusiasm.

Perhaps the darkest moment in Salem Village's history was the day in March 1692 on which Rebecca Nurse, a respected, slightly deaf grandmother, was sent to prison together with Dorcas Good, a child of four, whose mother had already been arrested. Separated from her mother, Dorcas was chained to a wall, in darkness, for eight

A Delusion of Satan: the Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials by Frances Hill
Hamish Hamilton, £18

months. Francis Hill suggests that the "afflicted" girls may have been revenging themselves unconsciously on their freer, younger siblings. She reminds us of James Bulger, the child murdered by two young boys in Liverpool. The evil that came to the surface so horrifyingly in Salem, she argues, part of the human condition.

Hill has made a careful study of the depositions and trial accounts still preserved in the Essex County archives. She uses them to point to some of the more glaring loopholes and miscarriages of justice in that horrifying summer. Why did nobody question how a "specter" could be so busily malevolent when the accused was either quietly at home or already imprisoned? Why did the girls escape suspicion when they named as witches people who were already long dead and whose names could only have been overheard in adult conversation? Why was it that, when an "afflicted" girl was ignored or given a thrashing, she stopped having fits? How could ministers, judges, even the governor himself have been so easily fooled by the hysterical imaginings of a pack of power-mad children?

It is, perhaps, most troubling of all to note that when people of wealth or high position were accused, they were allowed to escape. The families of the victims, meanwhile, paid dearly for having produced a witch. They were expected to bear the costs of prison lodging, of reprieves and even - the final insult - the expense of recovering the body for burial. The witches themselves went to a lingering death on Gallows Hill knowing that, as excommunicants, they were destined for Hell. Their families had the poor consolation in 1710 of seeing the convictions reversed, wherever a plea had been made. Not every "witch" had a family to plead for her.

Marion Starkey, in 1949, published a poignant, semi-fictional account of the trials. Her version, while vividly setting the trials against a richly-evoked background, was inaccurate and careless. Two historians, Boyer and Nissenbaum, published a thoughtful analysis in 1977, for the specialist reader. Frances Hill combines impressive research with a readable style and an ability to relate the events of 300 years ago to the larger question of mass hysteria and the shocking results it can produce when credulity prevails. This is an engrossing book, and a disturbing one.



Denounced: the New England trial of the Salem witches of 1692

Mary Evans Picture Library

Spencerian visions and the art of Sylvestration

Frances Spalding applauds two enthralling new collections of art criticism

Paper Museum by Andrew

Graham-Dixon, HarperCollins, £25

About Modern Art by David Sylvester,
Chatto, £25

and appearance in art, offering ideas and perceptions that keep the reader hooked.

For *Paper Museum* Graham-Dixon culled from his cuttings books 62 pieces. They are informative, well researched, thoughtful and direct. Where it is necessary for him to summarize existing opinion on an artist's work, he does so in words that are freshly minted. Occasionally his conclusions jar: the argument that Giacometti's theme is "fear of open spaces" is much too limiting; and to dismiss Stanley Spencer's visionary paintings with the remark that he painted best when facing facts ignores the obvious: that everyday facts are the

material out of which Spencer constructed his visions. But for the most part it is difficult to argue with a critic as persuasive as this. Time and again he cuts through to some central perception, as when he observes that Lautrec painted, "not the relations between people, but the distances that separate them".

Earlier this year, in his *A History of British Art*, a book timed to coincide with a series of television programmes, Graham-Dixon acknowledged a debt to David Sylvester. Respect for this senior grandee does not, however, prevent him from criticising the "inflationary rhetoric" which Sylvester brought to his essay on Willem de Kooning for the 1995 Tate retrospective. Sylvester's habit of making sweeping assertions - Barnett Newman is "the greatest painter to have emerged since the Second World War" - gives *About Modern Art* a hectoring tone. Emphatic judgements imply that the canon of art remains fixed and that Sylvester's concern is purely with the first division. This attitude may

seem oppressively conservative. Nonetheless, these critical essays are deeply fascinating. They also constitute a genre that is entirely Sylvester's own.

At the Royal College of Art in the 1950s tutors used to joke that, if David Sylvester appeared in the the Senior Common Room, some of their lunchtime chat would reappear a week later in *The Listener* having undergone "Sylvestration". There is no doubting that Sylvester has listened a great deal to artists' views, but his method depends crucially on a dogged examination of his own sensations in front of art. Though he is often acute on the relationship between a work of art and the period in which it was made, he is less interested in history than physical presence; it is the impact a painting or sculpture makes on us that he tries to catch - how it affects the head, heart and guts.

He argues convincingly that Sickert's late works "achieve" the most startling and brutal originality and modernity. Equally gripping is his revelation of the

pain and anxiety that lay behind Matisse's stated desire to put "the lightness and joyousness of springtime" into his art. And in one startling parenthesis he drops the remark that a Mondrian abstract is as intimate as a Dutch interior. But his provocative *aperçus* need to be read within the context of the observant, lengthy arguments which tug and pull at the mind with great persistence.

These essays, many of which have been reshaped and recycled over the years, are the product of sustained brooding on art, of a painstaking search for the right words to catch a particular experience or sensation. He is not the first to marvel at Cézanne's ability to give us both flux and a sense of endurance. But he takes this observation further and finds in this reconciliation of contradictory states "a moral grandeur which we cannot find in ourselves". Elsewhere, in a painting of the Montagne Sainte-Victoire he notes how the sky "is keeping the lid on the tumult below." His accuracy is wonderful.

Three thousand years of rape and pillage

Karen Armstrong's account of an embattled holy city is both passionate and fair, says William Dalrymple

Despite frequent references in the Psalms to "the peace of Jerusalem", the Holy City has seen more rapine and pillage than any other comparable patch of ground on earth. Jerusalem's soil is drenched with blood spilt in the name of religion: its hospitals are full of lunatics claiming to be King David, Isaiah, Mohammed, Jesus or St. Paul.

Sadly, it is not just lunatics who squabble over Jerusalem. Rival Palestinian and Israeli historians differ radically in their interpretation of almost every turn in their capital city's history. Israeli historians tend to look to the Hebrew Bible to back up the Jewish

claim to Jerusalem. They point to the "Book of Samuel" to show how King David established his capital in the city 1500 years before an Arab army first appeared below the walls. Palestinians reply that King David's Jerusalem has only the most shadowy basis in the archaeological record.

The arguments remain bitter, and it is a brave person who ventures into this historical minefield. But the decision by Jerusalem's Likud administration to declare 1995/6 as the 3000th anniversary of King David's establishment of Jewish Jerusalem has provoked a flood of Israeli propaganda, including such heavyweights as Sir Martin Gilbert who recently published his *Jerusalem in the Twentieth Century*. The anniversary was boycotted by the Palestinians, so there has been no Arab response to this Israeli barrage. But a book has now been published which is the closest we are likely to get to historical balance on the subject. This is Karen Armstrong's excellent *History of Jerusalem*.

The qualities of Armstrong's book are

A History of Jerusalem: One City,

Three Faiths by Karen Armstrong

HarperCollins, £20

probably best gauged by comparing her narrative with that of Martin Gilbert. For while Armstrong gives space to the hopes and aspirations of all the peoples for whom Jerusalem is holy, Gilbert's book is narrowly Zionist, and he has little sympathy with the Palestinians of the city, be they Christian or Muslim.

Thus while Karen Armstrong gives due prominence to both the Holocaust and the central disaster of modern Palestinian history - the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes at the creation of Israel - Gilbert manages to avoid referring to this Palestinian catastrophe at all. The difference between the two books is particularly vivid when you compare their narratives of the 1948 Battle for Jerusalem. Armstrong gives equally moving accounts of

the fate of the 2,000 Jews expelled from the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem and the 30,000 Palestinians expelled from the Arab suburbs of West Jerusalem. In comparison, Gilbert gives over 14 pages to a description of the heroic defence of the Jewish Quarter, while dismissing the expulsion of the far greater numbers of Arabs from the west of the city in a single short paragraph. Only Armstrong gives an indication of the methods used to clear these Arab suburbs: "The Hagana began to attack the large middle-class Arab suburbs of West Jerusalem. Raiding parties cut telephone and electricity wires. Loudspeaker vans drove through the streets blurring such messages as 'Unless you leave your houses the fate of Deir Yassin (where 250 Palestinians were massacred) will be your fate'."

Again when dealing with the war of 1967, both authors convey the excitement of the Israeli capture of East Jerusalem and the triumphant Jewish return to the Wailing Wall, but only Armstrong goes on to tell the other side

of the story: how the Jewish refugees of 1948 all had their property returned, but not one house in West Jerusalem was returned to a Palestinian. Instead, within ten years of the Israeli conquest, a further 37,065 acres of Arab land had been seized; and today only 13.5 per cent of East Jerusalem remains in Palestinian hands.

When historians of the eminence of Gilbert can produce works of such bias and prejudice, there is a vital need for an even-handed chronicler like Karen Armstrong, one who is not afraid to stand up and speak unwelcome truths. A thread of real compassion for Muslims, Christians and Jews runs through her book as she struggles to understand why a city sacred to three religions has often brought out the worst in all of them. Her conclusion is a passionate call for respect and understanding: "The societies that have lasted longest in the Holy City have been the ones that were prepared for tolerance and coexistence," she writes. "That must be the way to celebrate Jerusalem's sanctity today."

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Hollandaise in La-La land

Melanie McGrath is unamused by an American presidential farce

My search for Warren Harding
by Robert Plunket
Quartet, £7

Warren Harding, 29th President of the United States, was the Golden Retriever of American politics – amiable if a little thick, loyal if credulous, his only solid achievement being a talent for go-fetching pork bellies on behalf of crooked aides whilst simultaneously wagging his tail and feigning innocence.

Thankfully, Robert Plunket's book is not about Harding, but it is about his type – a cast of vainglorious nobodies bumbling along in a bumper-to-bumper Los Angeles of bullet-pocked restaurants and smog-filled skies. For *My Search for Warren Harding* is a farce set among La-La Land's more desperate losers.

Plunket's narrator, Elliot Wiener, a po-faced, Morris-dancing New Yorker, is anxious to reap academic stardom by uncovering President Harding's love letters to his sometime mistress, Rebekah Kinney, a now-dilapidated crone living in a pile in the hills beneath the Hollywood sign.

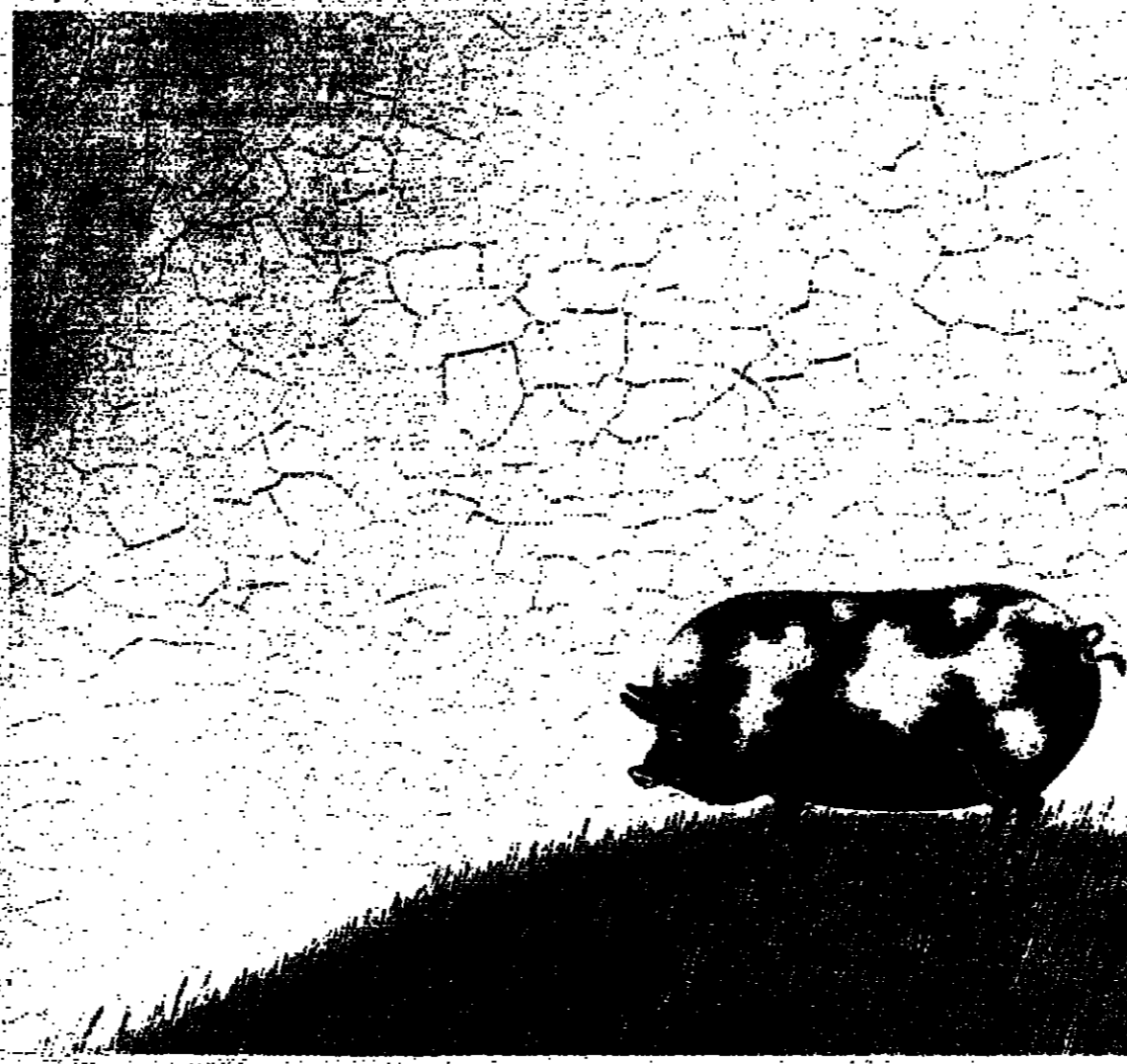
"Wiener" is an American term of affection for the male genitalia, and Plunket's narrator is indeed something of a dickhead. This becomes evident when, in an attempt to inveigle himself into the family, he rents the pool house in the grounds of the Kinney home and begins a series of increasingly desperate attempts to steal the Harding letters, first by seducing Rebekah's vast granddaughter, Jonica, and then by trying to buy off her semi-estranged, white-trash husband, Vernon. Since this is a farce, it all comes to an absurd and pointless end during which Wiener gets what's coming to him but not, of course, what he came for.

Plunket is at his best when he's being playfully camp, which isn't often enough. His inclusion of recipes "Blender Hollandaise – one of John Kennedy's favourites", is a masterly touch: assured, inspired, witty. But occasionally he tries too hard. Of his friend Eve's housekeeper, Wiener remarks: "there were rumours that she had survived Auschwitz. And not as an inmate." And whilst all history is, in my opinion, fit for comedy, the more painful the event, the tougher the task. Plunket doesn't quite pull it off.

My Search for Warren Harding made something of a splash in the States and it does contain a number of brilliantly witty comic scenes, such as Wiener's helpful hints on the discreet disposal of porn mags: chop them into tiny pieces, mix the pieces in with bits of the *TV Guide* and distribute handfuls of the mix evenly throughout the city's public wastebins, and his inevitable humiliation when an LAPD porn squad discovers a pristine copy of *Bound and Gagged* in the pool-house rubbish bin.

Though Plunket tells his tale with great pace, only the final third of the book really works. Many of his jokes are straight from the *Allo 'Allo* school of comedy, featuring Mexican housekeepers who can't speak proper English and hilariously smuggy days in LA. That's about as funny as remarking that English Northerners eat mushy peas.

But Plunket's biggest problem is that his anti-hero, Wiener, whilst being a prize prat, is never quite lusciously horrible enough or even, come to that, efficiently horrible enough to sustain our interest in him, which leaves us at the mercy of Plunket's patchy jokes and the jaunty unravelling of his farce.



Its skin blotched and mottled like the relief map of a porcine planet, the Oxford Sandy & Black is a breed of pig noted for 'excellent temperament and good breeding qualities'. Along with the other 20 odd portraits painted by Martin Wiscombe in *The Old Pig* (Robinson, £5.99), its dignity and timelessness are emphasised by the cracked (and wholly fake) patina. From the Lincolnshire Curlycoat, the Gloucester Old Spot, the flesh-and-black Saddleback and the Belted Kentucky, these are pigs from the British naive paintings of the 19th century, re-painted with affection and obvious respect.

The one that got away

Anna Murphy reads a fishy tale of seduction

The Hook
by Raffaella Barker
Bloomshury, £14.99

Twenty-year-old Christy works on her father's trout farm. She laughs when her sister warns her that there's "something fishy" about her new boyfriend, and replies, "Come on Maizie, we're a lot more fishy than Mick, literally." *The Hook* is about the slippery nature of identity: it explores the dangerous inevitability of letting other people shape your perception of yourself and others, and the way in which love, both sexual and familial, can blur the boundaries of identity. Watery imagery refracts characters and events, only occasionally becoming laboured, and everyone is shown to be in some way "fishy".

Before she met Mick, Christy "didn't really believe she existed if no one was there to see her". She sees in him the chance to find herself: "to shed her skin of transparent shyness and swim out supple and strong". Her adolescent identity crisis has been magnified by an invidious relationship with her now-dead mother, of whom Christy is a younger replica. The mother felt her daughter's "slender youth mocked her"; a dress-buying trip, when the older woman was overcome with hatred at her usurper, is painfully recalled. But whereas Christy's mother rejects her child – even from the grave – Mick swamps her, making decisions, arranging things; his "vast appetite swallowing hers". He makes her feel both empowered and impotent.

This man who takes over Christy's life is without identity: he comes with no past, and no present other than when he is with her. They meet in a nightclub on her birthday and the anniversary of her mother's death and he mysteriously knows her name. Yet neither

Christy nor the reader learns much more than what Mick looks like. And even the scar on his forehead – one of the few things revealed about him – changes appearance and becomes something about which he invents stories. As Christy's suspicions of Mick mount, the scar suddenly appears "like a hook caught beneath the skin". It is only a matter of time before the true Mick is revealed in.

The account of the love affair is soon sunk in mystery. Where does Mick get his money from? Where does he disappear to? Who are his secret friends? Mick seduces the other people Christy loves – her father and brother – as easily as he does her, and stops her from seeing for herself. She feels it is "better to glide on the surface, darting between those half-submerged questions without touching them".

Flash-forwards to the courtroom provide narrative "books" in which Mick's shady other life is revealed. "Mr Fleet is presenting his life," says the Judge; "we need to know him before we can judge him". Mick's life has always been a fiction: Christy has never really known him. Barker manipulates different levels of knowledge so that the reader knows more than Christy, but never too much more. *The Hook* combines stylish, careful and insightful writing with the pace and verve of a thriller.

The Eton beating song

Roger Clarke reads a doomed attempt to rescue a reputation

The Land of Lost Content: the Biography
of Anthony Chevenix-Trench
by Mark Peel
Pentland Press, £16.99

The forlorn social misfit known as "Chummy" to his boys burst on the popular consciousness two years ago, when an otherwise pedestrian history of Eton College noted that Anthony "Chummy" Chevenix-Trench was removed from headmastership of the school in the Sixties, partly out of concern over his fondness for flagellating boys. A careful establishment cover-up was laid bare; news of it even featured on the front pages of several newspapers.

Eton has had its fair share of deviant headmasters. The poet Swinburne became a seasoned and unapologetic flagellant directly as a result of his schoolboy experiences at Eton. Eton schoolboys even now are gently dissuaded by the librarian from asking to see the original manuscript of Swinburne's *The Flogging Block*, a slavering, weak-minded celebration of corporal punishment that was acquired (I suspect) about the time of Chevenix-Trench's efforts to refurbish the school library.

If the Eton birch sent Swinburne mad, Chevenix-Trench was already mad before he got there; that seems the kindest way to interpret Peel's quaint biography of the man. A prisoner-of-war working on the Burmese railway for the Japanese army, he endured conditions from which no-one could be expected to recover. His time at Eton, as a result, seems to have been one long battle to avoid a nervous breakdown. Eton in the Sixties was quite decrepit and full of hopelessly arcane Edwardian practices; Chevenix-Trench went about trying to get rid of the more bizarre customs – though to position him as some kind of "moderniser", as Peel does, seems unjustified. His

Achilles heel was always his passion for beating, and no moderniser could espouse such a practice. William Waldegrave, then a callow youth already given to speechifying, was the object of Trench's ire when he campaigned against birching in the school magazine.

Trench was also a drunk, and when discipline began to break down in the school, the governors removed him. It was a crushing blow from which the poor man never recovered. However Fettes College took him on; Tony Blair was one of his pupils. These days he'd be put on one of Michael Howard's sinister lists, and would be unlikely to find another teaching post.

This book would not have been published had it not been for the recent allegations, and it is a book with an obvious agenda: the memoir as character witness. The way it refers to its subject in the first person throughout as "Tony", and its absurdly pompous rhetorical flourishes ("Tony's reputation lay pierced and bloodied like the toga of some murdered Caesar") will not gain Chevenix-Trench any new friends. Eton, now modernised and humane, is better off keeping quiet about his dubious regime. It certainly doesn't need Trench's cronies coming up with half-baked hagiographies like this.

Paperbacks

Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

The Creature in the Map

by Charles Nicholl (Vintage, £7.99) Having written thrillingly about South America (*The Fruit Palace* on Bogota drug gangs) and 16th century mysteries (*The Reckoning* on Marlowe's murder), Charles Nicholl combines these twin obsessions in a startling history-cum-travel book inspired by Raleigh's search for El Dorado. This legendary city, named after a golden man, was imaginatively mapped by Sir Walter on the fringe of a strangely zoomorphic lake (hence the title). His quest ended in disaster, but Nicholl hears of an aviator who saw "a river of gold" at the same spot. An enthralling, darkly magical read.

The Picador Book of Blues and Jazz, ed James Campbell (£7.99) A patchy cull, devoted mainly to exploring the psychopathology of the jazz. We can, for example, compare Mezz Mezzrow's pean to dope with Art Pepper's ambivalent view of heroin. Humour crops up intermittently, as in Ellington's stately sacking of Mingus for misbehaviour and the terminally cirrhotic Charlie Parker's ironic remark that "I have a sherry before dinner". But there's too much padding. Why choose Larkin's embarrassing poem ("Oh, play that thing!") about Bechet and Geoff Dyer's dreary ruminations on Coltrane but nothing from Miles Davis's explicit autobiography?

Crusades by Terry Jones and Alan

Exeira (Penguin/BBC, £6.99) A breathless gallop through 200 years of intermittent warfare between two sides who both appealed – in their different languages – to the same God. The tangle of creaky alliances, treachery and ineptitude is unravelled into an engaging narrative by the two authors, though their penchant for demotic doesn't always come off. It is hard to imagine that Behemond of Normandy actually told his nephew Taacred to "kick ass". This edition is sadly bereft of the fine illustrations of the hardback (still in print at £16.99).

The Next 500 Years by Adrian Berry (Headline, £7.99) Though this discursive voyage into the future takes a little time to pick up pace, Berry proves to be a highly stimulating guide. Each page contains so much of interest that his book might become a *vade mecum* for the dinner party bore. We learn, for example, that human wealth is due to triple in the next 20 years and a Thatcherite heaven of opportunity will open up following the privatisation of space travel. In a similarly optimistic vein, Berry breezily dismisses global warming. But there is a hitch in the shape of a new ice age. We have 500 years to prepare for a 100,000-year cold snap.

After Breathless by Jennifer Potter

(Bloomshury, £5.99) Set on the windswept beaches outside Bordeaux and the Gauloise-wreathed boulevards of Sixties Paris, Jennifer Potter's sexy new novel will fuel the fantasies of the most romantically-minded Francophiles. Janey Wilcox, a 19-year-old student on a year abroad, falls for a middle-aged Frenchman with lips as full as Jean-Paul Belmondo's and several *armchairs* full of family skeletons. They spend their time lurching on lamb stew in dodgy roadside cabs and making out in the front seats of Renault Gordias. A story of mad, bad love, dark secrets and lots of unfinished essays.

Fanny Stevenson by Alexandre Lapierre (Fourth Estate, £8.99) "Heart-whole and soul-free", Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of his wife Fanny whom he married in 1880, and in many ways this charismatic, free-thinking American woman led a life every bit as adventurous as his own. Married before she met him, Fanny continued to thrive after the writer's death – abandoning their island home and taking a lover several decades her junior (a man who later married her only daughter, a mere slip of a girl aged 56.) Lapierre has unearthed a fascinating subject for a biography, but her inclusion of fictionalised dialogue to enrich her story only overloads the tale.

Krik? Krak! by Edwige

Dantiat (Abacus, £5.99) Edwige Dantiat draws on her own experiences as a Haitian exile to write about the children of first generation immigrants in New York City. This collection includes "Caroline's Wedding", a moving account of a young woman preparing for her sister's marriage and a new life outside the family's Brooklyn home and "New York Day Woman", the story of a daughter who spies on her mother as she window-shops along Madison Avenue. A little heavy on folk wisdom and hokey sayings, but Dantiat, who was recently chosen by *Granta* as one of America's top 20 young writers, is a master of quiet and dignified prose.

A Time to Keep by George Mackay Brown (Flamingo, £5.99) The lives of the Orkney fishermen who populate Mackay Brown's stories are so elemental and bleak that it comes as a shock when a car judders over the skyline, indicating that a particular tale is set not in the Iron Age, but in 1952. This, his second collection (reissued just before the author's death this year) includes the story of Celia, a young woman forced to take in Norwegian skippers to pay for her whisky habit, and the ballad of Capt Stevens, an old sea dog who drowns himself in navy rum and self-pity. These windswept tales that leave you more invigorated than depressed.



Who's reading whom

Antonia Fraser's *The Gunpowder Plot* is published by Weidenfeld this month

The druid in specs on the back of the advance copy of Roy Strong's *The Story of Britain* (Hutchinson) is the author himself and the cover bears the legend, "one man's quest to give to everyone the history of their country". He begins with the Celts, zips through the Romans and Dark Ages and brings us, 367 glorious pages and nearly 300 photographs later, to "Beyond 1990". This is history at its best: clear, comprehensive, and told with huge aplomb and elegance of style. It will solve your chattering present problems for years to come.

Audiobooks

Sacred Elephant read by Heathcote Williams
Jarvis's Frayn read by Martin Jarvis

Africa is the shape of an African Elephant's ear: India that of an Indian elephant. Heathcote Williams's *Sacred Elephant* (Naxos, 2hrs 30mins, £7.99) tells you of all elephants in fact, fiction and folk lore, and will have you chucking away anything ivory you ever owned and running straight off to the World Wild Life Fund waving your chequebook.

Originally broadcast in the mid 1980s, Jarvis's *Frayn* (BBC, 2hrs, £7.99) was one of those happy couplings which rapidly became cult listening. Jarvis is the most outstandingly versatile of all audio readers, coping as easily with being all the guests at an Elizabethan cocktail party as with putting over a claustrophobic family car journey.

Christina Hardyment

country

Whatever happened to our reedbeds?

Christian Dymond takes a look at projects that aim to restore one of Britain's most valued wildlife habitats

By the time the reed-cutting season ended in spring, Eric Edwards had harvested more than 4,000 bundles of golden Norfolk reed. In his marshman's way of measuring, the thickness of a bundle equates to "three hands and a bit" or enough to tuck comfortably under one arm.

Although these days he uses a powered cutter more than a scythe, his method of operating has scarcely changed in 29 years. He cuts the reed as low as possible, cleans the grass out of it with a short rake, taps the bottom of the bundle on a wooden board to get the reed level, then ties it up and stacks it.

Mr Edwards is employed by the Broads Authority and his harvested reed goes entirely for thatching. In the summer he cuts sedge, which is used for laying along the ridges of thatched roofs.

"One of the things I love about this job are the birds I've come across like water rails, bearded tits and marsh harriers," he says.

"In my early days I used to hear the booming of the bittern a lot, the sound the male makes in spring when it's breeding, but now I hear it much less frequently."

And there lies a sad story. From 80 booming males recorded throughout the country in 1954, the figure dropped to 20 last year, says Dr Paul José, the wetlands adviser at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

What is to blame is the neglect and loss (estimated at about 40 per cent since the war) of reedbed and the consequent effect on plants, birds and other animals that depend so much on this wildlife habitat for their survival.

At present there are about 6,500 hectares of reedbed in the UK, spread over some 900 sites but generally found in river floodplains and low-lying coastal plains. The biggest area, at 2,500 hectares, is in the East Anglian Broadland.

Rob Andrews, conservation officer with the Broads Authority, says some reedbeds are certainly managed properly. But when reed is not cut regularly – once a year or once every two years – a "litter" of dead stems, leaves and other grasses forms on the bottom of the bed. The ground starts to dry out, new growth of reed is discouraged and very quickly the area turns to scrub.

This means that bitterns, for instance, which can no longer feed off eels, rudd, roach and bream they catch in the shallow water of the reedbed.

The RSPB, the Broads Authority, English Nature and the British Seed Growers Association have already launched an initiative to revitalise Britain's reedbeds, urging better management of existing beds and the creation of new reedbed areas.

Currently the Broads Authority is looking into other commercial possibilities for reed, apart from thatching, in the hope of encouraging greater management of reedbeds. One idea is to burn poor-quality reed in power stations, another is to use them as ingredients in animal feed.

Two years ago English Nature launched its Bittern Recovery Project with the aim of providing suitable habitats for 100 booming males in Britain by the year 2020. To meet that target it is reckoned that a total of 1,600 more hectares of reedbed will be needed. One-third will come from restoration. The rest will come from newly formed reedbed.



Sally Miller at work on the Somerset Levels reedbeds

Photograph: Chris Jones

At a 176-hectare site at Ham Wall on the Somerset Levels, the RSPB along with English Nature and Somerset County Council is involved in just that. The intention is to create one of the largest areas of new reedbed in the country, eventually attracting the range of birds normally associated with this habitat. The European Union has given £500,000 towards the project.

Shallow water and reed on the gently sloping edges of open-water areas will provide a suitable feeding area for birds, while

an extensive ditch network will allow water to move freely through the site, its levels controlled by sluice gates.

The site manager, Sally Mills explains: "To establish the reedbed we're using a mix of seeds, seedlings and rhizomes. A fairly large area can be covered quickly with the seeds but they do tend to dry out easily and are not very good at competing with other vegetation. The success rate of rhizomes is a great deal higher because, after all, they're already an established part of the plant."

Phase One of Ham Wall is 16.5 hectares. It was completed in November 1994. Reed there is now about eight feet high. Reed in the 25 hectares of phase two, planted this year with the help of 120 local school children, is already several inches high.

Sally Miller is full of hope for the future. "Wouldn't it be excellent to see the return of reedbed birds to the Southwest – and to hear bitterns booming again in Somerset, as they did in the 1970s?" she says.

The happy reaper of the bullrushes

By Helena Battershall

Felicity Irons has grown used to attention during the summer bullrush harvest. At six foot, the 29-year-old actress-turned-furniture maker cuts a striking figure among the pleasure boats on the Great Ouse. "People call me the wild woman of the Fens," she laughs, before shouting at passing river day-trippers to slow down. For the last three summers she has propelled her wobbly 17-foot punt alongside the river banks, chopping the clumps of dark-green bullrushes with a seven-foot scythe.

Only decades ago, more than 20 punts used to harvest the river by Holywell in Cambridgeshire during July and August – now Felicity steers the only one.

A trained actress, she made a serious career switch after she broke her back in a car accident in Australia in 1990. Her mother, who runs an antiques business, taught her to restore rush furniture and in 1992 Felicity set up her own business and moved on to creating her own designs.

She started cutting the rushes herself when the last members of a family that had harvested the Ouse for hundreds of years finally retired. They persuaded her to take up the trade.

After a two-hour lesson from 69-year-old Jack Arnold, she took to the river. Even now, during the harvest, he awaits her return to see how much she has cut.

"He thinks I'm a real grafter. I've surprised him that I've continued with it and surprised him how hard I work," Felicity maintains the Arnold family tradition, beginning the harvest on 1 July every year – the birthday of Jack's rush-cutting brother Tom, who died in 1994. She also receives a blessing for her rushes from the local vicar, who holds the annual ceremony in the nearby Ferryboat Inn.

Rush-cutting is gruelling work, requiring balance and stamina. Unlike her predecessors, who opted for outboard motors in more recent years, Felicity chose to hand-steer her punt with a long pole. "I'm a romantic. I don't like the noise and kerfuffle of motors; you can't hear yourself think on the river."

Anchored up, she sharpens her blade, deftly cuts the rushes without destroying the roots, then gathers the unwieldy bundles (up to 10 foot long) and bangs them hard (an action known as "tonking") to remove the weed. She sometimes stacks them so high on the punt that she can barely see over them.



Felicity Irons on the Great Ouse

Photo: Philip Nixon

Rush beds take about two years to regrow and this, combined with rush damage from river dredgers, forces Felicity to move further down the river each year. Before cutting in a new area she needs to get permission from local landowners and from the environment agency. "Next year I'll have

to buy a motor – I'll need to go too far," she says. She has also invested in another punt and hired an apprentice as her business has expanded.

She works from 8am until 4pm, gathering between £700 and £800 worth of rushes a day. It sounds an impressive amount of money, but the season is short and the work is hard. "Every year I forget how demanding it is – it's taken me three years to get used to the river."

She sells about 75 per cent of her harvest, using the rest for her own designs, from baskets to intricate woven bedsteads. As one of Britain's few surviving rush-cutters, Felicity tries to persuade manufacturers to use her stock rather than the more woody imported saltwater rushes from the Continent. "Freshwater rushes are more silky and velvety – a lot of people are changing over."

Despite the demands of her furniture business, Felicity does not intend to leave the harvesting to paid help alone. "I don't know how many people would carry on doing this – but I love it. Seeing the thing through from start to finish is very satisfying."

Artist as killer turned conservationist

Why does a successful artist push some pictures, finished or almost finished, to the back of his work-place and leave them there indefinitely? There is no single answer to the question – as will be apparent at the studio exhibition of works by the late Sir Peter Scott, coming to the Wildlife Art Gallery in Lavenham, Suffolk, in October.

Wildfowler, sailor, artist, conservationist and bird-man extraordinaire, Scott died in 1989, leaving as his memorial not only the hundreds of pictures which he had sold, but also the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, the sanctuary, now of world-wide repute, which he founded beside his home at Slimbridge on the banks of the Severn.

His widow, Philippa, knew many paintings were stacked in the Canvas Room, the alcove at the back of his studio where he kept his canvases and frames; but it was not until a couple of winters ago that she and a friend, Mary Penny, began sorting them.

When she realised how large the accumulation was, she called on the distinguished bird artist Robert Gillmor for advice. For him, the contents of the Canvas Room were "an absolute treasure trove". There were drawings galore, unfinished studies and



DUFF HART-DAVIS

many sketchbooks. But there were also numerous oil paintings, most of them never seen by the public, including several from 1933, the year of the artist's first one-man show. Together with Lady Scott, her daughter Daffa and Mary Penny, Gillmor formed a hanging committee and selected nearly 150 works for sale in the autumn.

Lady Scott found that "it was quite difficult to decide" what her husband would or would not have wanted to go on show, for the exhibition will illustrate not only the range of his techniques, but also his conversion from killer to conservationist. For example, there is one memorable study of red deer in the Highlands, from the days when, in his own words, he was "an uninhibited hunter answering quite simply the urge to kill". A stag and his hinds peer from beyond an

outcrop; the slaty blue of the mountain, the silver of light along the dark sky beyond, the dun colour of dead grass, the rain slanting down, the tense attitude of the deer now that they have seen something – all this breathes the experience of an ardent stalker.

Again, the early studies of duck and geese date from the time when Scott was still an active wildfowler, and even if they are less accurate than later works, they are painted with tremendous fervour and passion. In one, geese are coming in to land in front of a huge, tangerine moon; the paint, laid on thick with a palette knife, glistens with highlights, not only in the background, but also on the birds' plumage.

Here, too, is evidence of Scott's habit of continuing to draw, no matter where he might be. A small sheet covered with red-ink sketches of geese turns out, on closer inspection, to be writing paper from the Hotel Seymour in New York.

Several pictures vividly portray the artist's wartime service in the Royal Navy. In one, as crude and violent as its subject, steam gunboats (in which he specialised) are slugging it out with the enemy: star-shells are bursting, red tracer looping, and in the distance a ship has just sustained a direct hit, a

brilliant burst of flame.

In utter contrast are the delicate drawings of the actress Jenny Agutter, done when she was starring in the film of Paul Gallico's novel, *The Snow Goose*. There are also striking lithographs of the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, made in 1947.

As to why Scott kept all this back – according to Robert Gillmor, there are many possible explanations. Some paintings went out to friends on long loans, and returned years later. Some may have gone into exhibitions and remained unsold. Others may not have quite satisfied the artist, who felt he wanted to do more to them. Others, again, he may have liked so much that he did not want to part with them. As Gillmor puts it, "Bits and pieces from the past pile up in every studio."

The exhibition should take place in the year which marks the 50th anniversary of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Commemorative events are being staged in Britain and overseas.

An illustrated catalogue of the studio exhibition, which will run from 6 to 27 October, is obtainable from the Wildlife Art Gallery, 97 High Street, Lavenham, Suffolk, CO10 9PZ, price £10.

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Designs worth caring for — the legacy of Harold Peto

Anna Pavord visits two Edwardian gardens of the rich and opulent

How many nights did Harold Peto, garden designer and architect to the pampered rich of the Edwardian era, spend in his own bed at Iford Manor, Wiltshire, in the year 1910? I'm not trying to invent a particularly arcane trivia game. It just happened that within a space of a few days, I visited two gardens that he was involved in that year. One was for the MP John Annan Bryce, on Garinish Island, County Cork. The other was for Willie James, who expensively entertained Edward VII at West Dean Park just north of Chichester in West Sussex.

Given the fact that 30mph was a dizzy speed for a motor car in 1910, managing those two projects alone would have been difficult. But Peto was on the Riviera as well that year, designing a house and garden, the Villa Rosemary, for Arthur Cohen in the Alpes Maritimes. At the same time he was conjuring up colonnades for the garden at Isola Bella in Cannes. Peto could do colonnades in his sleep. Pergolas, too.

We came upon Garinish in an ideal way, sailing into Bantry Bay on a yacht which we were taking on down the coast to Kinsale. From outside, looking in, the island seemed wildly romantic, lush with foliage, surrounded by outcrops of rocks. And seals.

Being a big fan of Peto's, I'd long wanted to see Garinish (or Ilacullin as it's now called), so first thing next morning we lined up on the quay to take a boat out to the island. You are not allowed to land on the place under your own steam.

It should have been magic. The setting. The views. The superb Italian *casita* swathed in wisteria. The sunken pool garden. The pavilion with its rosso antico marble columns. The rare plants. But for me, the garden was a huge disappointment. It seemed completely worn out — tidy, but exhausted. The sunken pool garden was overwhelmed by harsh, inappropriate bedding out. The walled garden, apart from the cen-

tral mixed borders, was almost entirely abandoned (though there seemed to be plenty of gardeners about).

Occasionally a frisson up the back of your neck reminded you of how enchanted this place might be: a glorious stand of *Iris japonica* in the pool with stepping stones halfway along Happy Valley; a beautifully built flight of slate steps, edges as complex as a millefeuille pastry, leading up to the belvedere balanced high on the western edge of the island. From here you looked out over a pattern of slippery silver sea interlaced with green tongues of land.

Given the disappointments of Ilacullin, I hadn't allowed myself to get too excited about West Dean. Consequently I wasted days of pleasurable anticipation. The place is a miracle. Five years ago a new Gardens Manager, Jim Buckland, was appointed. He and his wife, Sarah Wain, persuaded the Trustees of the Edward James Foundation (Edward was Wille's son and a friend to the Surrealists — Magritte, Dali and co) to spend a significant amount of money bringing the gardens — particularly the huge walled garden — up to scratch. It was money well spent.

In the central enclosure of the walled garden is an astonishing hamlet of greenhouses, old Foster and Pearson models of the turn of the century. There are pit houses and hot houses, three-quarter span and lean-to houses, all superbly restored and filled to bursting with beautifully trained figs and peaches, vines and nectarines. The smell of the ripening white peaches, fanned out textbook fashion against the back wall of one of the lean-tos, was the most sensuous thing that has passed under my nose the whole of this year.

Several of the houses are filled with the collections of chili peppers and tomatoes that Sarah Wain has been building up this year — 75 different peppers, 58 different tomatoes. The houses that aren't growing crops are crammed with tropical plants: bromeliads, vast

hairy begonias, phalaenopsis orchids, lush arching ferns. I felt drunk with excitement. I have never been in a kitchen garden so rich, so profuse, so well ordered, so tempting.

Yet as a whole the garden, surprisingly, lacks a grand design. The house is not linked to its surroundings in any convincing way. Perhaps this is what led James to say to Peto — who had been with him at Harrow — "Peto! Produce me a pergola". The pergola itself is astonishing, more than a hundred yards long and made of stone pillars linked by wooden overthrows. The design and detail at the top of the columns mirror those of the pergola Peto made that year at Isola Bella. Perhaps he had a yard full of these stone columns, ready to run up pergolas on command.

It is beautifully planted, clematis now taking over from the earlier rambling roses such as 'Veilchenblau' and 'Sanders White Rambler'. It runs roughly parallel with the house, though well to the north of it. Walking along it in the direction of the house, the view is terminated by an enchanting small summerhouse. If you walk the other way, the view falls off into nothing, because steps at the end of the pergola lead down to a small, sunken garden with an oddly shaped dog-leg pool.

So the pergola, though fabulous as a feature, looks un-anchored in its setting. None of this matters, because the standard of gardening is so high — the roses and wisterias expertly tied in, the choice of the ferns and hostas at their feet quietly appropriate.

I'm going back to West Dean as soon as I can. They sell some of the produce from the kitchen garden in the visitor's shop. There were fat, bursting figs on the day I visited. I'm hoping some of those white-fleshed peaches might be on offer.

The gardens at West Dean (01243 818210), five miles north of Chichester, West Sussex are open every day until the end of October (11am-5pm). Admission £3.



Jim Buckland and Sarah Wain, who have expertly restored the West Dean gardens

Photograph: Andrew Hasson



CUTTINGS

Before I went on holiday I thinned the gooseberry bushes, leaving some fruit to ripen to what I hoped would be amber perfection. A reader, Mr Higginbottom of Youlgreave, Derbyshire, had reminded me of the delights of dessert gooseberries. "To most people" he wrote, "the gooseberry is a toughened polythene sac filled with an acid strong enough to take the enamel off your teeth. But varieties like 'Langley Gage', 'Whitesmith' and 'Whinham's Industry', properly treated, can yield delicious, aromatic fruit. "There is no substitute for double digging and tons of ancient compost, followed up by copious mulching and a twice yearly feed. To develop their full flavour, gooseberries need trace elements and magnesium as well as the high potash fertiliser generally recommended. The second application should follow fruiting, when the laterals for the next year's crop can be shortened to five leaves. Blackbirds and thrushes like gooseberry plots. A ferocious cat or net is the only answer." I fell down at the last post. No dessert gooseberries this year.

WEEKEND WORK

Vigorous pruning is needed on wisterias. Choose the growths that you want to keep to fill extra space and if they have not started climbing round any support, help them on their way. Shorten all other growths by half, leaving about five or six pairs of leaves intact, to be shortened again in next February's pruning.

Trained apple and pear trees may need gradual summer pruning. Leave the leaders at the ends of all the main branches untouched. Shorten all new side shoots by a third.

Layer border carnations. Choose young side shoots that have not flowered and nick halfway through the joint at the base. Do not cut them completely. Bend the side shoots down and peg them firmly into the ground with bent wire. Cover the split stem with fine damp soil and keep the plant well watered. Layers should have rooted by early September. Start planting autumn flowering bulbs such as colchicum and sternbergia. Continue to dead-head — especially roses.

Cut out old raspberry canes as soon as fruit picking has finished. Tie in new canes, leaving no more than eight or 10 canes to each plant. Tidy strawberry beds, cutting off old leaves and removing straw.

Anna Pavord

Little better than weeds? Think again

Kim Auston in defence of leylandii and sycamore

Two of the fastest growing plants in this country have become two of the most scorned. Yet attitudes to leylandii and sycamore are not entirely fair.

Few gardeners will be unaware of the extraordinary effect that leylandii can have on normal, law-abiding citizens. Neighbours in Tillyard Craft, near Birmingham, have apparently been through £100,000 in legal costs in a seven-year dispute over a leylandii hedge. It seems that where leylandii is concerned, everyone wants to put the boot in, or better still, to get the herbicide out. Those who have no personal experience of leylandii tend to dismiss it with the special contempt that the gardening cognoscenti reserve for plants such as marigolds, begonias and dahlias. Basically, leylandii is common. For gourmets it is fish and chips; for opera buffs it is Gilbert and Sullivan; for serious gardeners it is leylandii.

Aside from its phenomenal growth rate (it can reach 60 feet in 25 years), its faults extend to a big appetite and an ever-increasing demand for space. But it does have its good points.

Left to its own devices and given enough of the things it requires, it can form a magnificent specimen, with a slender, columnar shape, reaching about a 100 feet at maturity. There is a wonderful example at Bickton Park, Devon, and another at Wakehurst Place, Sussex. The truth is that few of us have the space to grow leylandii properly and so it is those looking for a quick screen who have claimed the plant for their own.

Considered dispassionately, its growth rate, tolerance of exposure and ability to withstand drastic pruning would be considered assets in most other trees and shrubs. It is a victim of its own success, however, for these qualities have so endeared themselves that it is now planted everywhere: a dangerous weapon in the hands of gardeners and landowners who lack sensitivity to the nature of landscape.

Lines of leylandii marching across the countryside strike "suburbia" as surely as pony paddock fences do. Apart from the roads programme, it is difficult to conceive of a greater

abuse of our countryside. However, before we make a grab for the nearest chainsaw, it is worth reminding ourselves that this is not the fault of the tree itself, but of the people who plant it.

Sycamore is another tree in need of some slick PR. As long ago as the 17th century, the great John Evelyn was bemoaning the fact that its leaves "turn to mud and noxious insects, and putrefy with the first moisture of the season; and are, therefore, by my consent, to be banished from all curious gardens and avenues". Today, many people consider sycamore little better than a weed; it seeds freely in gardens and lawns and can appear to choke unmanaged hedgerows. In my experience, ash is just as invasive and just as difficult to eradicate but, in general, people are far more tolerant of it. Perhaps this is because ash is a native whereas sycamore is a relatively new arrival. It has been with us probably only since medieval times and therefore has still to be accepted. Newcomers to an English village will empathise.

Once upon a time, sycamore was actually rather fashionable. Capability Brown seems to have used it occasionally as a specimen (for example at Ugbrooke Park in Devon), and selected forms, particularly the variegated kind, continued to be planted throughout the 19th century.

Its historic credentials aside, a mature sycamore is a most handsome tree. Next time you're visiting a country house or garden, look out into the park and make your own judgement. You can recognise a sycamore by its dappled pink-and-grey bark, its heavy, curving lower limbs and its broad dome.

If you are not convinced by the aesthetic argument and require practical reasons for selecting your trees, sycamore is a great door in exposed situations: it is tolerant of salt winds and thrives in shade. It also produces fine, easily worked timber that can be turned to produce, among other things, those huge wooden bowls that you see in antique shops. So there you have it: admirers can enjoy this magnificent tree where it stands; detractors can simply enjoy products made from it instead.

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Looming on the horizon

Sit up and listen. This man has grand designs on an old favourite

People have always known Lloyd Loom, even if they haven't known what it is," says David Breese, the managing director and founder of Lloyd Loom of Spalding. "If you say to nine out of 10 people, do you remember, in your parents' house, the gold corner linen basket in the bedroom or the bathroom, they will say 'oh yes, my mum did have one of those'." To the unobservant eye, these linen baskets may look like cane but throw your dirty clothes into such a basket, and the chances are that they will snag on the cane's edges and split. Toss your delicate satin slip into a Lloyd Loom equivalent and it will glide gently over the smooth weave and finished edges, and on to the pile of clothes at the bottom of the basket.

Whereas cane or rattan is handwoven directly onto the frame of a piece of furniture, Lloyd Loom is a machine-woven material made from tightly twisted paper, reinforced down the middle of the web with steel and produced on a loom in a continuous strip (like a length of tweed) that is then cut and tacked on to a bent beechwood frame, with the web as the upright stake. Production is about 40 times faster than hand-weaving and avoids the blunt edges, creaks and sagging of short-stranded canes. However, the name is more commonly associated with the furniture constructed from this material, than its actual method of production. Some 20 million pieces were produced in America and England in the 50 years after the American Marshall Burns Lloyd patented his wicker-weaving system in 1917 and the furniture, especially the curvaceous deep-backed, high-backed chairs, is immediately evocative of the glamorous days of cruise liners and grand hotels, mint juleps on the veranda and, of course, satin slips.

By the 1960s the early makers of Lloyd Loom, in Menominee, Tennessee, and Lusty's in Bow, London, had gone out of business, their easy, natural look giving way to the modernism of plastic and metal furniture. But, in the early 1980s, David Breese, at the time an antiques dealer trading period pine furniture to the Dutch, noticed that there was an increasing demand from his customers for vintage Lloyd Loom pieces. "Before long, I was sending container-loads of old Lloyd Loom across to Holland," Breese sensed a potential market and, being a practical, inquisitive sort of chap, he took apart a chair, to see how it had been made. Ten years on, from that act of seeming destruction, he has created a company with a workforce of 95, an output of 700-800 chairs a week, and a 1995 Queen's Award for Export hanging in pride of place in the lobby.

Having decided that he wanted to make Lloyd Loom furniture himself, Breese set off



David Breese reclines in a 1996 Springfield armchair. Behind him sits one of the first Lloyd Loom chairs from 1922

Photo: Nicholas Turpin

on a stony path: with the factories out of production, it was impossible to find anyone who knew how the fabric was woven. The Lusty's factory in Bow had been blitzed in 1940, and the only people he could find who had worked there had been in painting and distribution, rather than on the looms themselves. However, by trial and error he slowly managed to get into production, adapting twisting machines and looms from the textile trade.

At present, 86 per cent of Breese's products are for the export market, with Germany and Holland being the main customers. "In Germany, they haven't any history of Lloyd Loom like they have in Britain, and they sell it as a design classic - this marvellous new product made from 25 per cent recycled paper. It's environmentally friendly and it is stylish." The way in which furniture is sold on the Continent, Breese believes, is more conducive to accepting modern designs. "They have furniture shops, the like of which you don't really find in the UK, with much more mixing of old with the new. Every town in Germany will have a shop like Heald's or the Conran Shop. That is our sort of customer."

With the appointment of a new managing director to run the furniture manufacturing (the company sells directly from the factory), Breese hopes to concentrate on contemporary designs, working with the industrial designer Geoff Hollington to create pieces with little more than a cursory nod to the past.

The UK market, however, is a different kettle of fish. Although the British are lovers of nostalgia, with so many original Lloyd Loom pieces still around at very reasonable prices, it is difficult to convince customers to cough up £200 or so for a new chair. But Breese is almost messianic in his conviction that Lloyd Loom is ready for its second coming. "I firmly believe that Lloyd Loom woven-fibre material is the material for the Nineties," he says with utter conviction. Next month, a showroom opens at the Spalding base which aims to display Lloyd Loom as an integral part of a modern house's furniture, rather than mere period pieces for the bathroom or bedroom.

Breese is trying to find other ways of moving out of the shadow of the past, while still retaining the integrity of the material. His looms are capable of producing about 1,000m more material a week than can be made into

furniture, so this is being sold to companies which have jumped on the bandwagon for such an attractive product. "So many people are interested in incorporating the look of Lloyd Loom into their products that, if prospective competitors don't get the weave from us, they will get it from somewhere else," says Breese. "We might as well have a slice of the cake, though I do generally try and sell it to people who aren't going to reproduce the look of Lloyd Loom furniture. For example, we sell to companies that make nursery furniture, or just the round chair seats." There is a big market for it in that way.

Breese has no fears of his company going the way of its predecessors. "Even if the classic styles of Lloyd Loom go back out of fashion, the material will never go out of fashion. Wicker has been produced since the early 1800s and only the styles have changed. There will always be a place for woven fibre. And there will always be a place for snag-free linen baskets."

Lloyd Loom of Spalding, Warden Lane, Pinchbeck, Spalding, Lincs PE11 5SY. Tel: 01775 712111.



Top ten Sports Division

We may not be doing too well out in Atlanta but the British remain a nation of sports enthusiasts. Sports Division, the biggest sports retailer in Europe - having recently acquired the Olympus chain - report brisk business in their stores. Below are last month's best sellers from their range of sports equipment.

1 Health Rider 96	£499.99
2 Mitre Ultima League football	£12.99
3 Sport Rider	£1.99
4 Spalding Molitor golfballs	£9.99
5 John Daly Golf set	£199.99
6 Olympus football	£4.99
7 Slazenger Championship tennis ball	£5.99
8 Speedo swimming goggles	£5.99
9 Adidas 3 Stripe back pack	£16.99
10 Speedo swimming goggles (Dolphin)	£5.99

Good thing

Pukka Pack, Free

The Pukka Pack, launched by the home furnishings shop Pukka Palace, is an entirely new approach to mail order. Instead of trawling through the usual glossy catalogue the size of a telephone directory, customers flick through a deck of cards organised in to "suits" such as wrought iron furniture, glassware, soft furnishings, and garden accessories. The pack is free and orders made on the special orderline number will be delivered free within the UK.

Pukka Palace, Pukka Pack: 0345 666660

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shopping

Fat dogs and Englishmen

We love to overindulge our pets. One London vet has set out to undo the damage. By Siobhan Dolan

Little did Beverley Williamson realise, when she rejected the soft centres in favour of the nut clusters, that she was steering Dusty, her beloved Cairn terrier, towards glory. The greedy hound was quite happy to devour the coffee creams, and it was only when Mrs Williamson took her to the vet on account of her bad breath, that the level of her addiction became clear. The vet refused to administer the anaesthetic necessary to clean the dog's teeth, as she was too fat. But now, as the reigning Pet Slimmer of the Year, she's a shadow of her former self, having shed 3.6kg on the Hill's Prescription Diet.

The "old" Dusty typified an increasing number of overweight pets. Recent statistics indicate that at least one third of dogs and one in 10 cats are overweight, but some experts believe that up to 50 per cent of our 14 million domestic pets could do with shedding a few pounds.

Steve Andrews, veterinary marketing manager at Pedigree and a qualified vet, remains convinced that the key factor is overindulgent owners. "People don't feed their pets according to the amount of exercise they're taking. In winter, for example, they still get the same amount, plus all the snacks. The poor pet has very little to do with it."

According to Andrews, owners are too easily taken in by those hungry eyes. "Beggings for rewards is something we teach our pets to do and it's a big problem during the weight-reduction programme. People think their pet is really hungry when often, a good play around with a ball is what they want just as much as a biscuit."

And it's not just vanity which is at stake. There can be serious health implications. "Any illness that you can think of can be made worse by being overweight, especially arthritis and hip problems," Andrews insists. "There's the risk of heart disease and diabetes and obesity can make the most simple operation very difficult."

Once you've established that your pet is carrying excess baggage, there are numerous courses of action. Ideally, you should take your animal to the vet for a full health-check. Bradley Viner, who has a practice in Pinner, Middlesex, is one of a growing number of vets organising clinics specifically for obese pets. "Usually, a change to a calorie-controlled diet is required," he insists. "The pets then come for weighing on a fortnightly basis. We start with an eight-week programme, at the end of which we reassess things, see how much weight has been lost and if more needs to come off. Once they've achieved their target, the animals must then be put on a long-term diet to maintain it."

The good news for those owners who feel they're condemning their pets to a life of bland, bran-filled food, is that the latest products are much more palatable. With sales exceeding a billion pounds a year, pet food is big business. So our animals' taste-buds represent the battleground on which the big guns, such as Pedigree and Spillers, compete for our pets' affections. The result is an endless stream of new menus: high-fibre, low-fibre (also effective in keeping dog mess to a minimum), dry or moist, vegetarian or meat. Even habitual snackers should not feel hard done by, simply substitute those cholesterol-laden cheese crunchies for Good Boy yoghurt drops. And Hill's Prescription Diet Canine goes one step further, promising to clean your dog's teeth as it munches.

An additional incentive comes in the shape of slimming competitions. The Pedigree Slimdown and the Hill's Nutrition Pet Slimmer of the Year, organised



Gilbert the 51kg basset hound weighs in at the pet obesity clinic

in conjunction with vets' surgeries, between them attract almost 1,000 animals. Last year's eight finalists in Slimdown lost a total of 72.9kg.

But it's not simply about the amount of weight lost. "If it was done on this alone," Andrews explains, "then the Rottweiler would always win over the chihuahua." It's the overall amount of effort which counts. As Andrews points out, for example, the battle of the bulge can be much more of a struggle with felines. "Cats on a diet tend to go out and catch mice, or even leave home, so for one to reach the final is a great achievement."

But not all owners are prepared to knuckle down, or even to accept, the task in hand. This is where pet counsellors can be invaluable.

"People think about their pets in the same way as they do about their children," Andrews explains. "You can't just blunderbuss in and say 'Your pet's overweight, it's going to die, it's got to lose weight'. It has to be tackled very carefully."

And a delicate situation can become potentially explosive if the owner, as well as the pet, is on the large side. This is where pet counsellors really come into their own. "Overweight people tend to have overweight pets," Andrews says. "This can make it difficult for the nurses running the weight-watchers' clinic. So we train them in the best way to talk to clients, how to explain it from the pet's point of view."

The Boutsros Boutsros-Ghali award for diplomacy must surely go to Christine, one of the Pedigree counsellors. "She's actually a bit overweight herself and finds it easy to talk to clients and encourage them to slim down with their pets," Andrews says. "So Christine gets on the scales, the owner will get on the scales and the pet will get on the scales. At the end of the day, if you want to lose weight, it has to be fun."

Dusty has certainly enjoyed a fuller life since shedding a third of her bodyweight. The 13-year-old has, for the first time in her life, embraced exercise, especially chasing squirrels. And the dog's new dietary regime has even rubbed off on her owner, Mrs Williamson. She has almost given up chocolate and her husband has kicked the habit completely. And all because the terrier loved Milk Tray.

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Pet food facts



It was James Sprat of Cincinnati, Ohio who gave life to the British pet food industry at the turn of the twentieth century. While visiting London he noticed dogs on the docks eating old ship's biscuits and decided to start producing biscuits for dogs.

Although it all began as dry food, moist foods have always been the market leaders. This is possibly because moist varieties appear to be closer to "real" food. There was also a scare some years ago that dried cat food led to fatal urinary diseases in cats. Last year 434,000 tonnes of moist dog food and 531,000 tonnes of moist cat food were consumed.

Although pet owners often complain that their animal is particularly "fussy", with pet food you really do get what you pay for. A *Which?* pet food preference test, carried out in 1994 found that when choices of premium and economy pet foods were offered to 32 cats and 32 dogs for 16 consecutive meals, most of the animals wolfed down the more expensive brands.

By law all pet food should be made with raw materials from animals which have been passed for human consumption – though generally this will mean that the meat found in pet foods comes from the same animals we would eat, but rarely the same parts. Contrary to popular belief Rover and Tiddles will not be offered meat from horses, whales or kangaroos.

Many vitamins are lost during the manufacture of pet food so some companies replace them artificially. The rich colour, however, is purely to convince the pet owner that the food is appetising. Animals are enticed by smell, taste and texture.

For more information on pet health contact:

Pet Care Trust, Bedford Business Centre, 170 Miles Rd, Bedford, Tel: 01234-273933
Pet Health Council, Thistledown cottage, 49 Main St, Sawston, Grantham, Lincs Tel: 01476-861 379
Hill's Science Diet: 0800 282438

Abigail Rayner

Cat lover, fish fiend or twitcher? Somewhere, someone is as obsessed as you. And if you're lucky they've opened a shop dedicated to your pin-up pet. By Julie Aschkenasy

Just Fish

Just Fish, as its name suggests, is a shop dedicated to scaly pond-life and creatures of the sea. Customers range from the youngest of pocket money punters looking to spend, perhaps £2 on bath magnets, through to friends of serious fishermen seeking suitable birthday presents like waxed jackets or 'salmon' mugs.

When owner Andrew Maclean, himself a widely travelled fisherman, opened the shop he decided not to bother with tackle but rather to concentrate on fish related merchandise and memorabilia. "People who want to buy fishermen gifts are often nervous going into tackle shops as they don't know what to buy. It's a bit like me going into a fashion shop to buy my wife something!"

Maclean's instincts paid off. After all, as shop manager (and proud owner of Fly Fishing by J R Hartley – yes, it really does exist!) Ian MacGregor says, 98 per cent of themed bathroom shelves would be a fearsome-looking dried piranha (£15) smuggled back by Maclean from a fishing trip to the Amazonian basin. "I packed 40 in my suitcases because it was very complicated to get any paperwork done so they ended up wrapped in every pair of knickers I had with me!"

In general though the stock is not at all scary and prices are keen. Fish come in all forms from popular dolphins and colourful fun fish to serious domestic species. Fun fish pens cost £6 ("I've seen them on sale for £16 – very naughty" says Ian), fish wrapping paper at £1.50 is a must and quality mugs (pike, carp, catfish, salmon and trout) cost £5. Other lines include mobiles, fish coat-pegs, very kitsch salt and pepper shakers at £13, and there's a three foot inflatable fish for £8.

Just Fish, Unit 14a, Thomas Neal's, Shorts Gardens, London WC2H 9AT (0171 240 6277).

Feathers Gallery

Feathers Gallery, is a small gallery and shop for bird lovers. So enthusiastic was its director Martin Thompson, whose life-long love affair with birds started in the 1950s when he watched his enthusiast uncles record and ring birds, that he had no trouble enlisting the services of well known "twitcher" Bill Oddie to trumpet the shop's launch in March this year. This fledgling gallery sells gift items such as cards, table mats (from £25 for six) and flying ducks for £25 along with more serious birds made from ceramic, wood and bronze and

specialist publications. Martin's largest range and particular pride and joy is his selection of colourful hand-carved European and African wooden birds (from £89) from Feathers of Knysna, a workshop with its own artists based in South Africa. Permanent reminders of favourite species from Robin, Wagtail and Sparrow to rarer Green Wing Teal, Avocet or Black Egret grace shelves and cabinets. Watercolour paintings by British artists such as Felicity Priest (£485) share space with framed prints

The Cat Shop

When Patricia Crouch opened The Cat Shop ten years ago her success was assured when a black cat appeared, seemingly from nowhere, marched into the shop and stayed for the day. Benson has been returning ever since and Patricia posts him back to his owner through his cat flap each night.

An artist by training, Crouch spent many years fund raising for the Cats Protection League, and this love of cats inspired her to set up her gift shop which stocks over 3,000 lines of cat related merchandise. Having lots of cat friendly artist and potter friends helped "I think one of the secrets of our success is that we get many things made exclusively for us which we sell along with the bread and butter lines".

Customers range from collectors and breeders wanting rare pieces of sculpture, to pet owners seeking cat artefacts that in some way resemble their own moggy. If you can't find Tibbles in the shop, commissions are taken to have ornaments made up from photographs (from £35). Or for something a little larger how about a life-size model of your own cat (estimates given).

Less ambitious customers can buy t-shirts (from £7.99) and cat jewellery (£1.95 to £150 for a hand-made piece). Or how about the very latest craze from the US, the ultimate wedding accessory – cat confetti (see picture left) in gold or rainbow colours at £2.50 a bag.

The Cat Shop, 21 Prince Albert St, Brighton



Is there honey still for tea? If you know where to look, yes; and there's much more besides. In a delicious new series, Michael Bateman enjoys the sweet taste of British summer

Plus: Michael Bywater confronts the newly respectable Ben Elton

And a celebration of 50 years of the Edinburgh Festival

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

We caught loads!

Katie Venner and sons enjoy a timeless day out mackerel fishing at Branscombe Beach, Devon

The venue

Branscombe Beach in Devon feels like somewhere safe from time. Cars can only reach it slowly down the long narrow lanes, while its miles of wave piled pebbles are backed by National Trust land. John Hughes, local salt and skipper of the *Branscombe Pearl*, spends every summer morning bringing in the crab catch, and every afternoon taking visitors mackerel fishing. He's been at it for 30 years. "People who first came on my boat when they were young now bring their own children," he says. "They say that nothing here has changed."

Yet within this fixed picture, delightful surprises have a way of happening. This is the kind of place where you bump into old friends you haven't seen for years. Dolphins and giant sea turtles have unexpectedly surfaced beside the Branscombe Pearl, and last week an eight-foot basking shark swam alongside, its jaws agape.

And if you are lucky with the weather, a hot afternoon can drift into a balmy evening while the sea turns pearly, a strip of turquoise lights the horizon and the moon sails into the darkening sky.

Brigid McConville

The visitors

Katie Venner, who works in Arts Training, took her sons Thomas, 8, and Alfie, 6, for an outing to Branscombe.

Thomas: "I thought the water would be much warmer, but it was pretty cold. It felt like crabs were crawling up you, but I soon got used to it. The waves were medium sized and I stayed in for about 25 seconds."

It was a hard, stoney beach that could hurt my feet, so it was not the best place to swim, but it was an excellent place to fish!

The fishing is really really fun. I felt a bit oozy from the boat moving, and when I caught my first fish I was amazed because I don't think I've ever seen a fish so close before or held one. It felt all soggy and it left lots of little silver scales on my hands.

You could feel when there was a fish, because when you pulled the line, it pulled back. So you pull it in to see if there is a fish, and if there is, the water is moving weirdly. But it doesn't matter if there isn't because there's lots more time. I caught six.

As the boat came in we hid the fish behind our backs and looked really gloomy and said to our friends on the beach: "Oh, we didn't catch a single one... but we caught LOADS! and then we held them up for everyone to see."

Katie: "The first time we came to Branscombe it was winter and we stayed in the Landmark Trust House which is haunted. I think Thomas was conceived here. We walked from the house to the beach one morning; there was a hard frost and when the sun came out everything sparkled as if it had been dusted with sugar."

We also did the Undercliff walk from nearby Lyme to Seaton. The cliff has slipped into the sea so you are walking on an area of ground which is completely wild. Half way along we got talking to two complete strangers who were going in the other direction. We agreed to swap car keys and drove each others cars to meet up in the middle, solving the problem of how to get back to where we started.

In the summer, the village is full of flowers and Branscombe feels like an old-fashioned beach, because it's pebbly there's not a lot of running about which makes it rather peaceful. And yet the kids can paddle or play football on the grassy area behind the beach. As there is no road past it feels safe. The cows come right to the edge of the beach and there is a wonderful view of white cliffs into the distance.

Last year we came down with friends in late September and had an unexpectedly wonderful evening. The sea was surprisingly warm and when we saw the boat at the jetty we decided to go fishing for our dinner.

Mackerel fishing is one of the few things I've done as an



On the beach at Branscombe: 'a stoney beach that could hurt my feet... but an excellent place to fish!' said eight-year-old Thomas



Photographs: Chris Jones

The deal

Branscombe Beach is on Lyme Bay, about five miles east of Sidmouth

Fishing: An hour on the *Branscombe Pearl* costs £3 for adults, £2 for children - "excellent value when you are also catching your supper" says Katie.

Fresh crab, dressed by John Hughes' wife Linda, is available from their home above the beach.

Access: Start early or late to avoid traffic jams in the Branscombe lanes. Parking close to the beach costs £2. Or, park at the village hall free and take the footpath for about a mile through meadows to the sea.

Tea and cakes for three cost Katie £5.95 at the Sea Shanty café where cream teas are £2.50, main meals £4.50 and sandwiches from £1.60.

Beach chalets are available for hire from the Sea Shanty café (telephone 01297 680226). At £160 a week at Easter, rising to £320 mid season, they sleep four adults and two children.

Toilets are basic but clean, and have baby changing facilities. For odds and ends, sweet, gifts and beach toys, there's a shop near the car park.

The small and exclusive Lookout Hotel overlooking the beach has five double rooms for £89 B&B per night. Two course meals in the restaurant cost £18.50; £23.00 for three courses.

Guide me to the ice cream

William Hartston takes his kids on a tour of Loseley Park, and parlour

"I'm afraid we only have Loseley ice-cream," the waitress told me in a voice that suggested concern rather than contempt. I had been trying to create a Bateman-like scene by ordering Walls ice-cream in the restaurant at Loseley Park, but the demure elegance of the place could not be disturbed even by so outrageous a request.

Loseley Park, built in the 1560s at a cost of £1,640 19s 7d, is the historic seat of the More-Molyneux family. "It's pronounced 'Molly-nukes' because they're an English family, not French," the guide half-explains on the tour of the house.

Despite having one of the smallest Great Halls I have ever seen, the house reeks of history. Queen Elizabeth I stayed there twice - in one of the dingier bedrooms - and expressed a hope, before her second stay, that the place would be cleaner than on her previous visit. Apart from that welcome piece of muck-raking, however, the tour was generally too much of an inventory to bring the place to life. Concentrating on the commentary was also made difficult by the irritating habit of several mothers of small children who kept saying: "Be quiet, the lady's talking" every time their offspring said: "Mummy, I'm bored."

And that really is the problem of a family outing to Loseley Park: the grown-ups would be wasting a fine opportunity if they did not see the splendour of the house itself, but the kids just want to see the animals on the farm and, more important, eat the ice-cream - which isn't made at Loseley any more anyway.

It was, of course, the allure of frozen dairy products that led us to make the trip to the outskirts of Guildford to see Loseley Park (straight down the A3 from London, then take the B3000 past Compton village). Stately homes are all very well, but you need a little extra temptation to make the trip *en famille*. The traditions of Loseley, however, sug-



As well as eating ice cream, children can meet Loseley's animals



Photographs: Philip Meech

gest that the family would be happier entertaining royalty than acting as ice-cream vendors, however up-market. The old name of "Loseley", we were told, referred to the disgusting smell from the original pig-farm on the site. Loseley means loathsome, but why they called their produce "loathsome ice-cream" was not satisfactorily explained.

There has never been great wealth in the family," James More-Molyneux writes in the official brochure. When he inherited the estate, he explains, "my wife and I had no capital." It all reads like a pilot episode of *To the Manor Born*, especially the bit about "no money and death duties to be paid, no heating or electricity and a leaking roof". Anyway, the poor fellow, without two stately homes to rub together, went into the ice-cream business and never looked back. In 1987, the dairy products business was sold off, but the creamy milk still comes from the Jersey herd in the park.

But what, apart from eating the ice-cream, is there for children to do? On a fine day, a surprising amount. Visitors may take a ride in a tractor-driven cart down to the farm and see the animals - calves, lambs, some particularly filthy pigs and a fat pussy-cat made the strongest impression on my offspring. There are nature walks, which we didn't have the energy for, some very attractive gardens which we peeked at, and a mulberry tree that by all accounts lies down and feigns death whenever a member of the More-Molyneux family is poorly. And, we discovered late in the day, there is a pleasant children's playground equipped with the sort of rustic seesaws and climbing frames that a stately home's gardener might be expected to produce if told to knock up a few things for the children.

We had arrived at Loseley at 1.15 and the children were still enjoying themselves five hours later. The vast open spaces, the

relaxed atmosphere and the animals had kept everyone content without a single "I want to go home" and no "I'm bored" once the tour of the house was over. Taken altogether, quite a successful day out, though with the entrance fee (£18 for two adults and two children), meal and ice-creams at the restaurant (where they overcook the vegetables), it was not cheap. And for all the charm of the waitress, she really should not have left the "total" box on the credit card receipt empty when I was paying for lunch - a pernicious practice when a service charge has already been added to the bill. I wonder if they only do that to visitors who ask for Walls ice-cream.

Loseley Park Farm near Guildford is open Wed-Sat until 31 August. Grounds open 11am-5pm; house 2-5pm, farm 1-5pm. All-in-one tickets for house, gardens and farm: adults £6, children £3.

A weekly round-up of summer outings for children

'ARE WE NEARLY THERE?' Balloon and Air Rides

We've come a long way since the first audacious balloon ascent over Paris in 1783. Today an air trip is a special treat, but oddly enough, the more primitive the technology, the greater the cost.

Virgin Balloon Flight
54 Linhope Street, London NW1 6HL (free) phone 0800 132090. "We cannot say exactly where you will go," says Virgin. Since the course is dictated by the wind direction, this will always be a magical mystery flight. Phone for details of the 200 sites that are cleared for lift-off. From £135 per person.

High Adventure
RM Travel, Rayriggs Road, Bowness-on-Windermere, Cumbria LA23 3DN phone 015394 46588. In your balloon you don't just wander lonely as a cloud; you practically are a cloud, floating 2,000 feet above the lakes which poor old Wordsworth could only walk over. From £135 per person.

Bristol Balloon Fiesta
Ashton Court Estate, Bristol, (off A369, west of suspension bridge). Information line: 0891 252 262. For the public, it's a matter of watching, and leaping on trampolines, rather than actually flying. On 9-11 August, the balloons go up at 6.30am

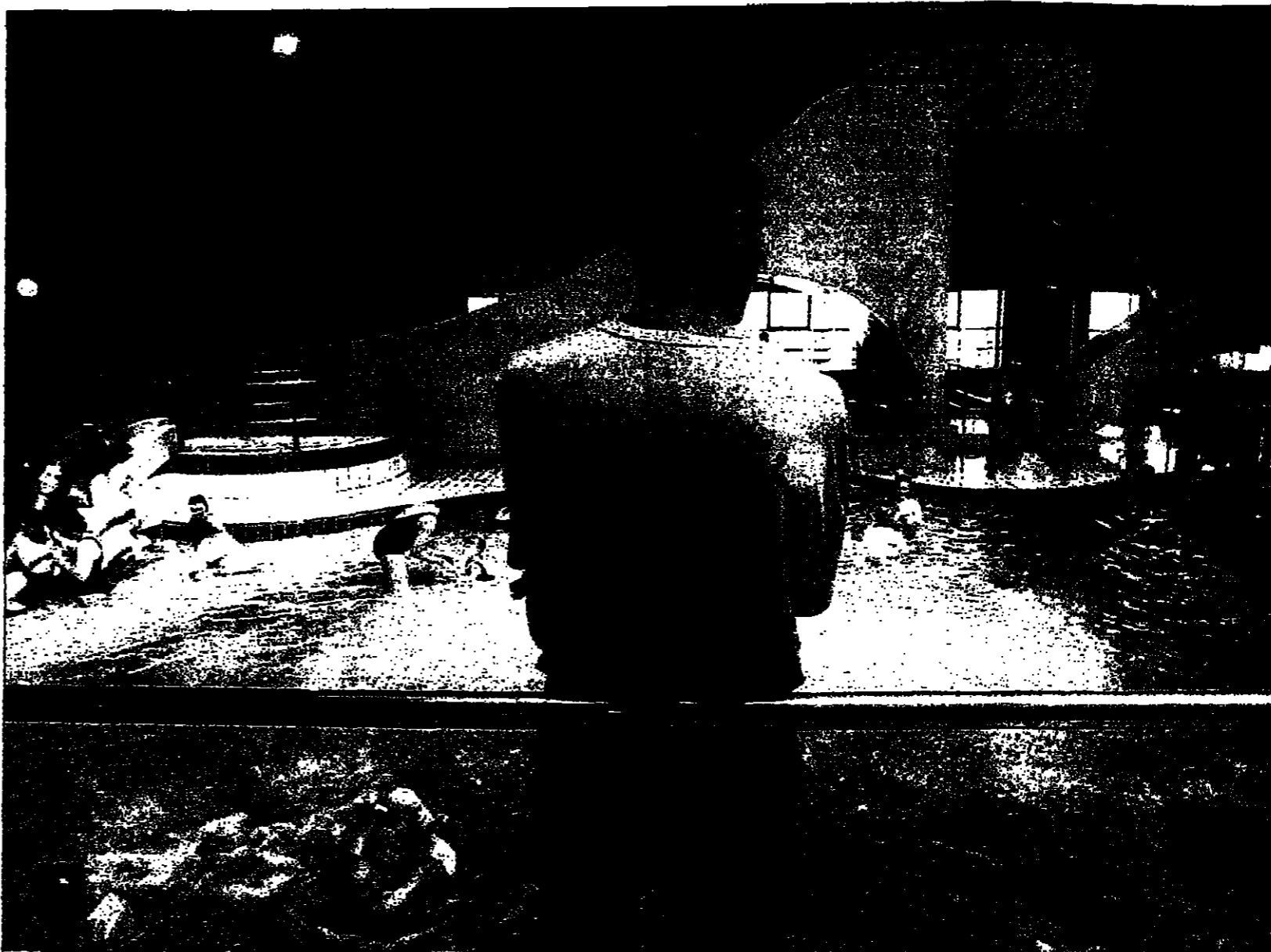
Blackpool Helicopter Rides
North Pier Heliport, Blackpool, Lancs FY1 1NE phone 01253 299699. Providing a better view than Blackpool's rollercoaster, the twin-engined Squirrel helicopter brings you the best way to experience the Golden Mile - 500 feet above at 120 mph. Those who are seriously afflicted by the aerial bug can have lessons on a different helicopter, a Robinson R22. Flights every day until Guy Fawkes Night, 10am to 6pm. £15 adult, £12 child. Half-hour trial lesson: £95.

Classic Wings
Imperial War Museum, Duxford, Junction 10 on M11 phone 01255 473832. As well as heavily booked flights over Cambridge or London, Classic Wings does eight-minute jaunts on weekend afternoons in a biplane. A ride simulator provides a Battle of Britain dogfight and an extraterrestrial stock car race. Flights cost from £20 adult, £15 child. War Museum only: £6.20 adult, £4.10 senior citizen, £3.10 child, under-five free. Family ticket (2 parents, 3 children) £17.50.

Jonathan Sale

Every morning the cycle begins again: a hard-to-break round of indulgence

Simon Calder paid £60 for a four-day break to see the world — Butlin's SouthCoast World, that is



'Protection from wind, privacy and reasonable access to London' — that's why George V took his holiday in Bognor

Photograph: Andrew Hasson

On the first circuit of the second day, I was banned. Head hung low enough to avoid the plying glances across the Tarmac from the real boy racers (average age 13), I was ordered from the go-kart track for the crime of overtaking on the last lap, and warned to stay away all day. And all because, I told myself in the hard-done-by manner of Linford Christie, the overtaker was dawdling like an off-duty milk-float.

Ritual humiliation had a couple of advantages. One was that I would stop burning up my cash at about the same rate as the tyres, since the race-track is about the only attraction for which an extra charge (£2) is levied. The second was that I would have to break out of the cocoon-like clutches of the holiday camp — sorry, the holiday village called SouthCoast World, the glitzy jewel in the crown of the Butlin's organisation.

If the British holidaymaker has a patron saint, it should be Billy Butlin. Indeed, photographs of the founder are splashed around the place as if he were a minor deity. In a sense, he is. The fact that those of us fortunate enough to be employed enjoy paid holidays is partly thanks to his zeal.

In the 1930s, he lobbied energetically, and ultimately successfully, for universal paid holidays. His motives were not entirely philanthropic, because he had plans for the first holiday camp

at Skegness. He needed holidaymakers. And working people — suddenly finding themselves with both the time and money to take holidays — needed him. Sixty summers ago, mass-market holidays were born, and most of the infrastructure bore the Butlin's brand.

Having shown how bracing all-inclusive holidays in Skegness could be, soon-to-be-Sir Billy searched out suitable locations to repeat the trick. Some were easy: Ayr, Pwllheli, Minehead, all now re-invented as Worlds of various kinds. But for the South Coast, he had to find somewhere stylish enough to steal trade from Margate and Southend, the established bolt-holes for sunseeking Londoners. Where better than Bognor, then (and now) 100 minutes by train from the capital? A place of regal pedigree, together with a vital stretch of shoreline free of Victorian villas.

The royal connection began across town in the tranquil village of Aldwick, now a suburb of Bognor. Well beyond lager-can throwing range from the Swinging Shillelagh pub (favoured drinking venue among the SouthCoast World sophisticates), Aldwick was where George V convalesced from tuberculosis in 1929. He chose it for its "protection from wind, privacy and reasonable access to London." After a four-month stay, His Majesty conferred upon the town the municipal equivalent of a knighthood: the right

to append "Regis" to a name which is so nearly an anagram of Boring.

On his deathbed, the monarch reneged with the terminal alliteration "Bugger Bognor". But among punters at SouthCoast World you are unlikely to hear such language, or indeed the invocation "Sod off Skegness". Everyone is having too good a time. The only time I heard raised voices or expletives was on the macho proving-ground that is the karting track.

SouthCoast World, the setting for achieving true delight, takes a bit of getting used to. Were the "holiday village" really a West Sussex hamlet, the county authorities along in Chichester would have bulldozed it years ago. The visual appeal is commensurate with, say, a 1970s light industrial park. Of course, it is just that: a factory for creating human happiness.

The urban hub of the Butlin's metropolis is a series of sheds housing restaurants, amusement arcades and shops. If you are on a £60, four-days half-board deal, your breakfast and dinner will be in the Goodwood restaurant. Or, as the only sign I saw of class discrimination revealed, the Goodwood Budget restaurant. Everyone else got tablecloths and waitresses; we skintiffs made do with self-service and Formica. The food had its roots in school dinners via hospital kitchens, but no one went hungry.

Careful on that grease-with-everything break-

fast. Most of the activities require a strong constitution. At Waterworld, a vast and very blue indoor swimming pool, infants can take a few tentative paddles while their elder siblings are surfing through the artificial waves or spiralling down a waterslide. The funfair picks up the forces with a collection of high-grade, high-velocity attractions that spin you in most directions at once.

After dark, attention switches to a veritable barn of an entertainment complex. The mass appeal of the shows is pitched perfectly, in a manner that Sir Billy would applaud. The recipe is simple. Sell decent beer at less than £2 a pint. Lay on entertainers who can genuinely entertain: professional musicians as accomplished as Sinatra or Squeeze, dancers with more panache than Pan's People. Encourage everyone aged 18 and upwards to cram into a cavernous auditorium and turn the volume up loud. Easy, and effective.

After your senses have taken a day of hearty battering, you would probably be able to sleep anywhere. Fortunately, you don't have to. Even budget holidaymakers get a clean, comfortable chalet with a bathroom, television and tea- and coffee-making supplies.

Next morning, the cycle begins again — a hard-to-break round of indulgence. Having had mine broken so early in the day, I was

able to make the most of England's most overlooked county. The boundary commissioners may have pinched Brighton and left behind Crawley, but West Sussex retains a calm, unspoiled air of gentility, with blossoming villages in superb scenery. William Blake lived nearby; this was the green and pleasant site where he envisaged Jerusalem.

Head southwest along the coast towards Selsey. Through a patchwork of neat pastures, punctuated by doddery steeples, you emerge on the fringe of a wildlife reserve. Not a soul disturbs the wittering seabirds and whispering reeds, where the English countryside meets the English Channel. Selsey is the point at which the crunchy gravel terrain gives out and subsides into the sea, with a High Streetful of tea shops offering shelter from a brisque breeze.

You could wander along the shore to dusk and beyond, but you would miss out on the endless entertainment back in Bognor. Butlin's is part of the Rank Organisation, and the connection with the movies is exploited in the on-site cinema. *Mission Impossible* was showing. Tom Cruise performed the sort of tricks that, if repeated at Bognor, would earn a lifetime ban from the go-kart track. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to go to Butlin's to lose your preconceptions.

Butlin's SouthCoast World: 01243 820202

As recent events have shown, airports need stringent security against the threat of terrorism. Some summers ago, I played a small part in the campaign by frisking passengers at Gatwick airport (NB: I was employed to do this by Securicor — it wasn't just a hobby).

The only exciting discovery I made was of a Camping Gaz cylinder in someone's hand luggage. If the pressure in the cabin had dropped too low, it could have exploded. So I was despatched with the cylinder to the far end of the apron to carry out a controlled release of the contents, and handed back the empty container to the far-from-cheery passenger.

Perhaps I was not sufficiently vigilant. Cecily Wolf of Brighton has just returned from Vancouver, minus her can of insect repellent. She warns: "Vancouver airport security are confiscating mosquito repellents and fly sprays on outgoing flights, on the grounds that they constitute 'toxic substances'. About 20 or 30 cans of spray are being confiscated daily from bemused passengers under the Canadian government's Aeronautics Act."

One of the security supervisors told Ms Wolf that the same procedure operates at other Canadian airports. "Although the regulations refer to all mosquito repellents as

toxic, he said he makes an exception for roll-ons, and allows them on board the aircraft. The confiscated items are given away annually to the Canadian public."

Although mosquitoes can be vile in Canada in summer, it seems a bit extreme to kit the locals out with repellents at the expense of tourists. A stick of Masi-guard repellent (which carries a big NON TOXIC notice on it) if you can top Ms Wolf's tale by having had something even less offensive confiscated. And my apologies if you were the one at Gatwick with the Camping Gaz cylinder.

Fidel Castro is unlikely to be impressed by the new Thomson Faraway Shores brochure, which devotes a dozen glossy pages to holidays in Cuba. Britain's biggest tour operator has decided to inject some humour into its description of the cash-starved Caribbean island. So it points out that "One of Fidel Castro's names is 'the air hostess', because he's always asking the Cubans to tighten their belts."

Dr Castro will also be annoyed that prospective visitors to Cuba have become embroiled in US legislation aimed at tightening the economic boycott against the island. Thomson is refusing to sell holidays there



SIMON CALDER

because of the threat of legal action from Washington.

"It's all to do with the Cuban exile vote in the forthcoming American elections," says Charles Newbold, managing director of Thomson. "We and our customers can't get caught in a battle between the US and Cuba. So until the Foreign Office tells us it's OK to sell those holidays, we will wait."

Several other UK operators are continuing to sell holidays in Cuba, in defiance of Washington. Regent Holidays of Bristol has been sending British tourists to the island for 21 years, and at present has a couple of dozen customers in the western hemisphere's last bastion of communism. The company's managing director, Neil Taylor, says that Thomson has over-reacted. "I have enjoyed many holidays in the US, and plan to take many more in the future, gambling that the threat of

jail for dealing with Cuba is an empty one."

Mr Taylor says American belligerence against the island actually enhanced Cuban tourism prospects. "The US government bans their citizens from visiting Cuba, which gives it a sort of snob appeal."

So far, Dr Castro has not retaliated by issuing threats against holiday companies that trade with America.

Last weekend, the M5 was a mess. Traffic on the motorway south-west from Bristol to Devon and Cornwall tailed back for 25 miles. The front page story on the *Western Morning News* on Monday asked "Is this the way to treat our visitors?" But having tried to travel to Newquay by train, I suggest that the motorists stuck in the queues were the lucky ones.

Whoever devises the train schedules to Newquay must have a grudge against the resort, or rail travellers, or both. On Sunday I found myself in the City of London, needing to travel to Cornwall. I tried to call Great Western Trains, but the company that has taken over services to the West Country is not listed with Directory Enquiries; try dialling 192, ask for Great Western Trains in Paddington or Plymouth, Swindon or Swansea, and you will draw a blank. So instead I went to

nearby Liverpool Street station and bought a ticket to Newquay. It was 12 noon.

Unhappily, the last train of the day to Newquay left Paddington 15 minutes later. Without a helicopter, it is impossible to travel from Liverpool Street to Paddington in a quarter of an hour. So after lunch I caught a train as far as Par, and paid £20 for a taxi to cover the stretch to Newquay for which I had a redundant ticket.

For the return journey, I vowed to catch the first train, and woke at dawn. Newquay station was packed, mostly with foreign visitors heading to London. We arrived at the connecting station, Par five minutes before the Penzance to Paddington express was due, and waited expectantly.

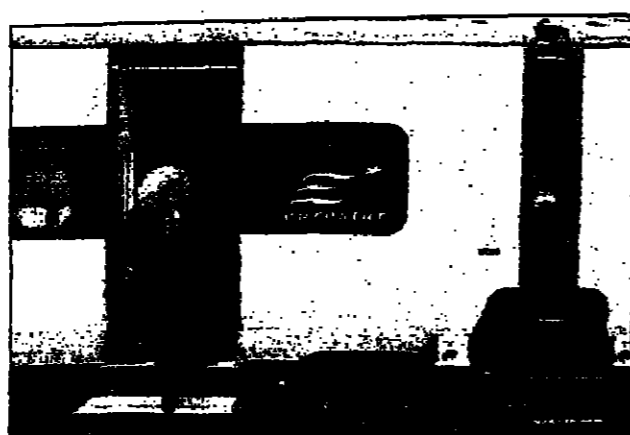
There were plenty of empty seats — you could count them as the train sailed past without stopping. The non-connecting trains are operated by a different company. Perhaps the managers spend longer investigating the prospects for privatisation windfalls than on scheduling services to meet demand. Everyone settled down to an 80-minute wait for the next train. Most of the overseas tourists spent the time on the amenity-free platform planning their next holiday, probably to a country where the railways are not such a shambolic joke.



something to declare

A likely story

"Direct services from the regions to start in 1996"



The promise contained in the 1996 French Railways brochure has been broken. There is no likelihood of "new direct Eurostar services from Glasgow and Manchester to both Paris and Brussels, and from Birmingham to Paris" that the company says will begin this year. Rolling stock for the Paris services has been delayed. To Brussels, the train operators are busy trying to fill existing services from London, without the problem of having to sell tickets on extra trains from Glasgow and Manchester to the Belgian capital.

No sign yet of the other great innovation in the French Railways brochure. The European Night Services linking London with Holland and Germany in the spring-

Trouble spots:

Advice from the Foreign Office on avoiding danger zones in Europe and the Middle East. Call 0171-238 4503 for further advice

Corsica: "There have been several recent attacks on property belonging to foreigners, including two British-registered yachts. Yacht owners should seek advice from the harbourmaster on entering Corsican ports and should consider moving on if they do not obtain adequate assurances of security while in port."

Spain: "Those wishing to travel to Spain should bear in mind the

recent upsurge in terrorist attacks apparently aimed at tourists, but British tourists have not been singled out."

Bulgaria: "Recently the incidence of robbery with violence against foreigners has increased, particularly on trains and near Sofia's central railway station. Under no circumstances accept any food or drink from strangers as there is a risk it may be drugged."

Israel: "There have been terrorist incidents during the last few months in various parts of Israel, including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, particularly bomb explosions in buses and busy shopping areas and rocket attacks on northern Israel from the Lebanon."

Saudi Arabia: "Following the bomb explosion at Al Khobar on 25 June there have been press reports of a call by an Islamic

extremist for Britain and France to withdraw their military personnel from Saudi Arabia. In this context this could be taken as an implied threat."

Iran: "There have recently been a number of cases of tourists being asked for identification by bogus policemen, who have then made off with the visitor's wallet and currency. Keep passports separate from other valuables."

Bargain of the week

The Worshipful Company of Shipwrights does not crop up often in these pages. But the generosity of the guild could mean the trip of a lifetime for four young readers. It is offering four grants, worth £2,500, to allow sailors aged 18-25 to take part in the voyage of the ship *Endeavour*, a replica of Captain

Cook's vessel of discovery. In October, two places are available from Perth in Australia to Port Elizabeth in South Africa, and two more for the 12-week voyage to London starting in December. Young people with ocean sailing experience should call the National Maritime Museum on 0181-312 6790.

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Everywhere you go, you see Mont St Michel rising from the sea

Sue Gaisford spends a weekend in Normandy

They probably save Room 25 of the Hotel des Bains for the English. It is on the first floor of the annexe which forms an island between two streets – and it has windows on to both. This offers an unexpected sense of familiarity. As the village of St Jean le Thomas comes to life, and its motorbikes and lorries shatter the approach of dawn, you start from your dreams, convinced that you are stuck somewhere near the central reservation of the M25.

Opposite the bed, on a magenta wall, a smallish photograph hangs rascally askew in a large clip-frame. It depicts a gloomy day in a field enclosed by rusty wire and brambles: a single – clearly mad – cow is crazily rubbing its poor head on a large stone.

You can't really grumble though. It's the kind of thing you expect from the *Guide des Logis*. This precious little green book lists hundreds of French establishments guaranteed to provide first-class food at reasonable prices. Though you can rely on adequate, or at least clean bedrooms, comfort comes second. The meal we had eaten the night before had been delicious, particularly enjoyable after we had persuaded them that a third replay of a tape of Elvis's *Gloomy Hits* would be unwise. It was just a pity that one of us had foolishly rejected the idea of earplugs at bed-time. When morning really came, incidentally, Elvis was reinstated in the breakfast-room.

Our daughter is doing an exchange with a French girl and we had decided to deliver her personally to her Norman family, and to take advantage of the current bargains in ferry prices to snatch a weekend away. By the second night, we had got as far as the bay of Avranches, a dazzlingly beautiful stretch of peaceful, rural coastline from which, wherever you are, you can see the island of Mont St Michel, topped by the spire of its abbey, rising from the sea like a rocky scoop of ice-cream.

Gazing at it, the previous evening, from the scruffy little bar on the beach at St Jean le Thomas, we had been surprised to hear a siren howl out over the sands. The barman, wiping his counter philosophically after pulling the beer, explained that they sound it twice every day, as the tide turns and the sea begins its dangerous return to the land. The water sweeps up behind the unwary, ready to cut them off: the currents are strong and deadly. Every year, oh, three or four people drown. Chastened, we asked how fast it travels. The man replied, as locals have replied for centuries, that it comes in at the speed of a galloping horse. The Hotel des Bains has a little swimming pool in its car park: though less scenic, it is a safer place to cool off than in that glorious, treacherous bay.

The Logis we had picked for the first night had been better. Right on the coast at Barneville, roughly half an hour from Cherbourg, the Hotel des Isles provided a bright and peaceful family room overlooking a less dramatic, less per-



Mont St Michel: like a rocky scoop of ice cream

Photograph: Robert Harding Picture Library

ious beach. Out there, children were playing on the sand as the sun went down and little sailing boats tacked lazily home. Bats swooped, hunting over the neat gardens of the residents and, up in the village, elderly couples and teenage girls danced sedately, enjoying an impromptu street-party. We could just still hear the accordion in the restaurant as they brought my husband some pliers, a wrench, several sharp knives and some needles: he sighed happily, knowing he was in for a treat. To our daughter and me, his *plateau de fruits de mer* looked like something scraped from the bottom of Grimsby dock: to him it was gastronomic paradise.

Normandy is so close, so accessible and so cheap to reach at the moment that it is tempting to nip across whenever you get the chance. We reckon there are still another 15 Logis within reach of a weekend. And there is a little village called Portbail which we scarcely had time to explore: it looked gor-

geous, and the utterly charming woman who runs the *Rendezvous des Pocheurs* seemed flatteringly delighted at the idea that we might come back. Perhaps we'll go and fetch the daughter in a fortnight. Such caring parents we are.

Getting there

The three competitors on routes from the UK to Normandy and Brittany are P&O European Ferries (0990 980980), Stena Line (0990 707070) and Brittany Ferries (0990 900800). Lower prices may be available through specialist agencies.

Accommodation

The *Guide des Logis* is available, price £12.95, from the French Government Tourist Office, 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AL; the public enquiry number is 0891 244123 (premium-rate).

A carload of children and the open road

Nicola Swanborough and her family drove all the way to Biarritz and back. They returned smiling

Friends have done it and come back ill. Friends with nervous twitches, crooked spines and the prospect of spending all next year's holiday money at the physiotherapist. Nevertheless, we naively believed we would do it properly, learn by their mistakes, show them how. A carload of children and the open road: 500 miles with the temperature rising.

Our destination was Biarritz, a stylish Edwardian resort on France's Atlantic coast, just about as far as you can go before hitting Spain and chosen because it seemed to offer a good combination of sandy beaches and nook-and-cranny fishing ports against a breathtaking backdrop of the Pyrenees. Most importantly, however, it seemed far enough south to guarantee a degree of sunshine, an essential ingredient of our holiday as we were camping: not the real McCoy, where everyone rows about the guy ropes, where it's all done for you: you simply drive up, plug in your mosquito machine, throw the sleeping bags on the beds and light the barbecue.

It was easy to romanticise the whole venture. We would be driving down to the south west of France, lazing at our own pace through vineyards, lavender fields, sunflower plantations and the like.

The reality was that we travelled more miles than we'd ever driven before at a stretch, confining four children in a mobile greenhouse and expecting a baby who had just learnt to crawl and bite, to sit still and behave. The collective average age of our carload was 15 and half, so following through the law of averages we should perhaps have darkened the windows, pumped Take That music very loudly out of the cassette and flashed up pictures of Bad Boys Inc every now and then. Our eight year old who aspires to being groovy, might have been impressed, but I'm not so sure about the rest of us.

My husband was driving and the smallest member of the family had bagged the chief seat in the front with his rear facing throne. So I was squeezed into the back. I fobbed off the troops for as long as possible with an array of dismal suggestions such as "just sit and look out of the window" or "chat nicely to each other". For the large part it worked but there were times when it was *I-spy or bust* (not an easy option when three out of the four children don't know the alphabet).

We had spread the journey – Cherbourg to Biarritz – over two days, with an overnight stop at a campsite in the Vendée, and in truth the first day was not too bad. The children were fresh and excited, the car was relatively tidy, our spirits

were high and the scenery was an inspiration.

We arrived at the Vendée pretty much intact, too late to use the campsite pool but in time to relax in the cool of the evening. It was at the campsite, however, that the trouble began. The children were on holiday, so they wanted to play bat and ball, blow the boat up, get to the beach, make sandcastles. In spite of our protestations they gradually unpacked the boot which had formerly been a work of art and which rapidly took on the appearance of the aftermath of a car boot sale.

Gone are the days when we travelled with smart suitcases. We pack our all in bin liners, one per person. They are wonderful for moulding round one another, and handy for cradling duty free. They also become horribly dishevelled when someone has burrowed an arm to the bottom of hers to find a bikini which she is not allowed to put on because "we are only staying one night".

By next morning the boot needed completely repacking and the tent looked as though we'd been there a fortnight. The children had to be bribed back into the car with reassuring white lies that it wouldn't be as long a journey as the day before.

Everything seemed twice as stressful, the road map bore no relation to the roads, especially not upside down with a dribbling baby crawling across it. No two people ever wanted to play the



same game at the same time: the bottles of drink which had been wedged around my ankles somehow broke loose and poured their contents over my ankles which could have been a happy announcement had it not been lemonade.

Whereas the day before nobody needed to go to the loo, this time everyone needed to at different times. In-car entertainment slipped well below rock bottom. George Formby, who had

Camping: basic and therapeutic; no furniture, carpets or clutter to contain

been uplifting on the tape the day before, started to take on the guise of a tedious street musician who won't put his ukulele down, and everyone began to wish that Noddy and his friends would get lost in the Secret Garden.

I passed out when we arrived at Biarritz, and our four-year-old had a nose bleed. The family in the tent behind us spoke only in expletives and we feared that the baby's first words might not be that choice. After that everything settled down.

We didn't get back in the car for a couple of days: we could see the mountains, smell the pool, if not the sea, and feel the sun – it was enough for us. My back-seat fear that the pilgrimage wouldn't have been worthwhile, with everyone homesick for Margate, was quickly eradicated.

If camping is basic, it's also therapeutic: no furniture to be careful of, carpets to spoil, fancy cooking facilities to be creative with, clutter to contain. The children enjoyed a freedom they never have at home, relaxing in a holiday atmosphere which at least seemed safe, though our complacency sometimes woke me up with a start in the night.

There was the journey home as well, of course, but with the same healthy tact that a woman never reveals to an expectant mother quite how gruesome labour can be, it's enough to say that the joy when it was all over made it all worthwhile.

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Sultry and empty: a city you can call your own

Julie Myerson savours London for the month of August



London in the Empty Abandoned month: Early morning in Covent Garden (left); Julie Myerson at an unburied café (below)

Photos: Philip Mesch

London in August – for those savvy enough to remain on its dusty, oblivious streets – seems a bit like New York. It has a similar edge and ache. You do what you like, when and if you like and then change your mind at the last minute. You don't have to queue or talk to anyone (they're mostly foreign anyway) or book in advance. The pavements are hot and hazy and everyone you know is away in a rented Norman gite, or on a blowy Cornish beach, or a last-minute package deal to Reykjavik. You can own the city, make yourself at home.

I first arrived in London in the long, slow middle of August. I was 23 and didn't have a clue about the capital's different months and moods. I came from a place where you grew up knowing everyone on the late-night buses and I craved the promised romance of the rat race, the decadence of anonymity.

I had one duffel bag and – thanks to a gracelessly endured secretarial course – a job. My flatshare was in Kensington, rented from the sister of a friend of a friend – and was inhabited by Pam, a physiotherapist, and Grace, a waitress and would-be punk rock musician.

Grace served pancakes on the King's Road. Her hair was jet black ("Should I go back to blonde?" she demanded as soon as I put down my bag) and her fingernails gleamed black, too.

Come on, what should she do? Go back to St Albans and get married, or chuck in the pancakes and try to make it in the music business?

Like many uneasy extroverts, she revealed herself to be as lonely as me and we often wandered the sultry, empty streets together, exhausted and dazzled by the loud August light, reading our star signs in humid laundrettes.

The flat – a basement – was dark and stuffy; the windows barred, the obstinate, heavily upholstered rooms lit by bronze candelabra-style lights with leaves that peeled down like banana skins. At the end of the hall was a cluster of Harrods carrier bags stuffed with size 4 1/2 reptile-skin shoes, belonging to no one knew who. My room was at the end of the corridor, partitioned off from the bathroom. Water belched and gurgled all night.

Pam was "away" and Grace worked shifts, so I was frequently alone in the evenings, padding around on the

thick, wine-stained beige carpets, listening to the hot, dark noises on the pavements above my head.

I didn't mind that I had no friends. I walked, got my shoes re-heeled a lot, eked out cappuccinos in deserted cafes, day dreamed on chilly marble gallery seats, did everything that was free – and then went back and did it again.

We enjoy the smell of scorched pavements hosed down on hot mornings, the lavish, dingy cool of museums where you can wander peacefully for hours among dinosaur bones and meteorites

Sometimes I got on the tube and rode the Piccadilly Line from South Ken to Russell Square and back again. The August tube stations were cool, yawning holes; I was an anonymous city dweller. My heart cantered at the mere thought.

In those first August days, I always set off an hour early for work. I told myself it was in case I got lost, but actually it was a mixture of creeping loneliness and the idea of that empty, languorous city out there, tempting me.

In Covent Garden, everything was still and closed, the pavements giving up their early morning smells of cleaning fluid, office workers snatching brief bags in shop doorways. One day as I passed the usual French Patisserie, a young man stuck his hand out of the pavement hatch and called me in and offered me a just-baked croissant on the house.

Too green to know this wasn't normal for London (though maybe it was normal for August), I went eagerly down the steps to a baking basement kitchen. Del clocked on at six each morning to turn on the massive steel patisserie ovens and had seen me passing more than once. He'd left New Zealand two months before and knew no one in the city and had wondered why I always looked so worried.

I explained I was still finding my way to work and he lent me his A-Z and showed me I was getting off the tube two stops too early for the South Bank. I continued to get off early anyway and kept him company for half an hour each morning as he flipped the croissants over on to their flaky, golden bellies. Then one day his French girlfriend turned up.

I don't know what happened to Del, or to Grace. But I became a Londoner and remain affectionately in thrall to this city in its Empty, Abandoned Mouth.

"Are you going away?" everyone says and, "When are you off?" "Don't you just have to get out in August?" – and I say no actually, we're all staying right here.

My man goes to the Test Match and my children and I roam tranquil streets whose edges are frilled with unhurried cafes and fruit stalls, and stacked banana boxes. We enjoy the smell of scorched pavements hosed down on hot mornings, the lavish, dingy cool of museums where you can wander peacefully for hours among dinosaur bones and meteorites.

The loneliness is all gone, but now and then little things jangle: the blue-burnt rush of wind from the underground, a waiter's teenaged face, the crunchy, singed smell of a laundrette, a bleakly wealthy Queens Gate Mews. And then I'm back, pounding these streets with no money or friends but a heap of excitement, always – rightly – convinced my life is waiting for me round some stifling, windy corner.

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SUMMER IN THE CITY

Ealing Jazz Festival, Watpole Park, Watpole Lane, W5 (0181-758 5743). 4-11 August, from 7.30pm. Free if you just want to lie on the grass but if you'd prefer a seat in the marquee, tickets cost £3. For the highlight get down on Sunday when the grandfather of British jazz, Tommy McQuater, opens the festival. Other players include John McElevy, the James Chadwick quartet, Bill Skeet, Mike Peter's world famous jazz band... the list seems endless.

Swiss Cottage Festival, Swiss Cottage, Avenue Road, NW3 (0171-586 8731). All day Sunday 11 August. Free. In the small park here this is very much a community do: there's theatre for kids, games, competitions and, towards the evening, a music stage where local youth bands show off their talents with a mix of jazz, reggae, rock, and Latin music. If this feast fails to satisfy excess energy, Hampstead Heath is a hearty walk uphill.

Tango, Broadgate Arena Summer Entertainments, Broadgate Centre, Eldon Street, EC2 (0171 588 6565). Wednesday 28 August, from 5.30-9pm. Free. The City of London is normally silent after 6pm, especially in August, when most of the big players in the dealing houses around the Broadgate complex are selling their yachts. But the spirit of Buenos Aires will bring it alive at the end of the month. Anyone can go to the arena and learn (or just watch) "Real" Argentine Tango.

Hay's Galleria Oyster and Seafood Fair, Hay's Galleria, London Bridge City,

Tooley Street, SE1 (0171-403 4758). 30 August-1 September 11am-7pm. What is, for most of the rest of the year, a quiet and mostly empty shopping plaza, comes alive as a bazaar for the annual fishy festival, including the National Fishmongers Craftsmanship competition.

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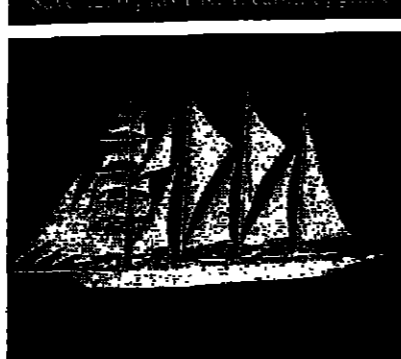
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property

What would you pay for a slice of the country?

Estates are getting smaller, but no less desirable. By Mary Wilson

What constitutes an estate? That's what many agents ask when they receive enquiries about marketing a property with a number of acres attached. The very general answer seems to be that if the property is in Scotland, you are talking at least 1,000 acres; if south of the border, then an estate can be as small as 150 acres.

Ideally it should have a house and at least three additional amenities—sport, which could be hunting, fishing, stalking; farming (let or in hand); and forestry or another enterprise. Private buyers look for the amenities and agricultural qualities of an estate—foreign purchasers are particularly keen on the sporting element.

According to Jim Bryant of Bidwells, in East Anglia, "traditionally a landed estate conjures up visions of a substantial house standing in landscaped parkland with a range of estate cottages, in hand and let farmland, forestry and a significant sporting value."

"Sadly, over the course of time a number of the great estates have been slowly reduced in size in an attempt to raise funds, and a number of small estate properties have appeared on the open market in recent years, either as a result of this fragmentation or where a new estate has been assembled with a new house set in amenity farmland."

The Furneaux Pelham Hall Estate is such a traditional estate. Bidwells is selling it for more than £4 million. It is for sale in its entirety or in up to eight lots. The main property is a magnificent Grade II* listed house with seven bedrooms and a swimming pool; it has 738 acres, a lake, self-contained four-bedroom cottage, stabling for nine horses, another farmhouse with swimming pool, and a commercial arable farm with a deer enterprise on the parkland. The 173 acres of woodland did provide a good shoot that could be reinstated.

"It is rare nowadays for a residential and amenity estate of this calibre to come on to the open market," explains Mr Bryant. "The key is the location—just 34 miles from London. So far we have had offers for both the



An estate should have a serious business side, say estate agents. Tregavethan Manor fits the bill, with a farm and stud. Chris Jones

estate in entirety and for bits of it."

What is very much in evidence at the moment, is that the purchasers of estates are no longer buying them as a status symbol. "People are buying estates because they want an income," says Christopher Wilson of The Wilson Group. "There is a very different perception of estates now than in the Eighties. Then purchasers just wanted a way of life and were prepared to pay out £100,000 a year for it. Now they want an estate to be a viable form of investment."

There are an increasing number of people, both British and from the Middle and Far East, who are buying a lump of land without a main house and building one,

thus creating a new estate. Longwood, a 1,376 acre estate which is being sold by Savills, for example, has 1,000 acres of farmland, 409 acres of woodland and 13 cottages and planning for a new 10,000 square foot Queen Anne-style house. It has been put on the market for offers in excess of £5 million by an offshore investment trust which wishes to take advantage of the rise in estate values.

For anyone looking to spend much less than a million pounds, James Harris, a Winchester agent, is selling Hawstead Farm in Hursley. The estate earns its keep (but no more than this) through a shoot. "This is a 211-acre Hampshire sporting estate with a

charming Grade II listed timber-frame two-bedroom cottage," says partner, Hume Jones. It has a park, woodland, pasture and arable land, and is on the market for £600,000.

James Laing of Strutt & Parker, reckons that "traditionally an estate has been worth more whole than in parts. It is only in the last six years, that selling an estate in bits has been much easier and produced more money for the seller."

Strutt & Parker is selling Tregavethan Manor, which is a profitable equestrian estate in Kenwyn, near Truro in Cornwall. The owner, Mrs Clark, has run a successful farm and small stud there for

many years and is now moving on to something smaller. The estate has a four-bedroom manor house, two semi-detached cottages, a bungalow, an arable and stock farm and well-respected stud with 16 loose boxes. Of the 285 acres, 265 are excellent farmland and there are also two lakes stocked with trout and carp. The agent is looking for offers in the region of £1 million.

The same agent has a very much larger estate, the Gaick Estate, in Invernesshire. This has 18,500 acres and has attracted considerable interest from the overseas market. It is being sold for £2.25 million.

Bertie Ross, head of Savills' Agricultural Agency, says: "An estate should earn revenue from more than one source and ideally have the main house on its own. It should certainly have a serious business side."

Savills is selling a small Scottish estate which is really two in one. The Finlraig and Morenish estates at Killin, Perthshire, are on the market together for £795,000. With 953 acres, these have two substantial houses, the old Finlraig Castle and a further house and cottage. With grazing, silage land, woodland, a loch and trout and salmon fishing, the estate is offered as a whole or in seven parts. "It was a much larger estate in the past, but has slowly been nibbled away and it's very likely to be split up into three viable properties," says Mr Ross.

Estates have attractive tax benefits. There are capital gains advantages, 100 per cent inheritance tax relief if the farming is in hand and 50 per cent if it is let—capital gains from forestry is also tax free. However, all these benefits could all disappear if there is a change of government, so now may be the time to buy...

James Harris, 01962 841842; The Wilson Group, 0171-589 4161; Bidwells, 01223 841841; Savills, 0131 226 6961; Strutt & Parker, Exeter, 01392 215631; Strutt & Parker, Edinburgh, 0131 226 2500.

Penny Jackson returns next week

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For What It's Worth

Although confidence in the housing market is increasing, it is with very careful steps that it is moving forward. In the second-hand market, sales are increasing and it is this sector that has been doing the worst. In contrast, sales of new homes—which were doing so much better than older ones—fell by 11 per cent in the first half of 1996. The latest survey of the property market from The Independent Home Sale Network—a group of 615 independent agents across England and Wales—shows that enquiry levels are up, with 81 per cent of agents reporting increased activity, although 6 per cent were still suffering from a decrease. However, "agents' comments on the market were generally far more favourable than the actual figures showed," says director, Hywel Luke. The report states that first-time buyers are still reluctant to come forward, except in London and the north-west, and it also confirms that the north-south divide is lessening, with a three-bedroom semi-detached house in the north-west now costing only a little less than one in the south-west, which averages at £55,300.

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The bulk of the population is still largely ignorant about the stock market and unaware of the benefits to be had from putting money into shares as a long-term investment

Is the private investor at a serious disadvantage when it comes to investing in the stock market? The conventional wisdom seems to be that he is. Discriminated against by the tax system, and starved of valuable information and opportunities by the way the City works, this holds that he has next to no chance of doing as well as the professional institutional investor. While the privatisation programme may have led to a revival in the number of private investors owning shares directly, most still have only one or two shares in their portfolios. So we are still a long way from reversing the long-term decline in wider share ownership in this country.

That, in essence, is the conventional argument on where the private shareholder stands. According to Sir Mark Weinberg, chairman of a committee set up by the Stock Exchange to examine whether the private investor is a dying breed, there is some truth in all this. But his committee's report, published last month, predictably got a poor press, with most commentators saying that he had failed to come up with enough specific recommendations to reverse the trend.

Sir Mark's real offence seems to have been that he failed to criticise strongly enough the Stock Exchange's new rule allowing companies to exclude private investors from most new issues if they so choose. It was this decision which originally prompted the setting up of the committee. In addition, he said it was largely up to the financial services industry, rather than the Government or the



JONATHAN DAVIS
INVESTMENTS

Stock Exchange, to come up with ways of tempting more private shareholders back into the fold.

Neither conclusion was guaranteed to win any plaudits from a constituency which prefers decisive-looking actions to well-meant words, and which has long marked the Stock Exchange down, not entirely without justice, as an enfeebled and not very effective organisation. Yet, in my view, Sir Mark is largely right on both counts. In fact, I would go further in saying that the outlook for private shareholding is probably brighter now than it has been for some time – partly because of new technology, and partly because of the recent changes in the financial services industry, which have introduced much more effective competition.

The impact of potentially low-cost PC-based systems for communicating information, coupled with the growing aware-

ness that financial services can be marketed successfully as consumer items like many others, should be eventually to transform the way that shares are owned and regarded in this country. What we have lacked so far is the emergence of a firm with the courage and resources to do for personal investment what Direct Line has done so successfully in insurance.

The market is certainly there, waiting to be exploited. The committee's research suggested that concern over the fate of the private investor should not be exaggerated. For example:

• Although private investors inevitably hold a much smaller proportion of the quoted stock market now than they did 30 years ago, this is largely the result of the growth in pension funds and life insurance industries over the period. But the number of individual shareholders has risen from 3 million to 9 million, largely as a result of the privatisation programme.

• Although private investors appeared to be net sellers of shares in the 1980s, the strong growth in share prices means that direct share investment still represents a larger proportion of the nation's personal liquid wealth than it did 20 years ago. (Remember also that the average pension fund has some 80 per cent of its assets in the stock market, so the proportion of the nation's total wealth now represented by shares is certainly at record levels).

• With the huge growth in the unit trust and investment trust industries over the last 30 years, investors now have a much wider range of choice over how and where

to invest their money in shares than they did before. Contrary to popular impression, the proportion of the population which holds shares directly in the UK is also about the same as it is in the United States – and still far ahead of most Continental countries.

Despite this evidence, what is not in doubt is that the bulk of the population is still largely ignorant about the stock market and unaware of the benefits to be had from putting money into shares as a long-term investment. Sixty per cent of the population still do nothing but hold all their spare cash in a building society or bank, regardless of whether it is long-term or short-term savings. This is clearly not a rational course of action when at times like the present their money is losing its value in real terms each year.

Most Britons, the research suggests, are essentially very risk-averse. The big unknown is how far this is due to a genuine horror of risk, and how far to an inadequate understanding of the nature of the risk involved in buying shares. The Weinberg committee concludes, reasonably I think, that it is as much the latter as the former. Assessing risk is not one of our strongest cards as a nation. The National Lottery and the BSE crisis have amply demonstrated as much this year.

Of course there is more that the Government could do on the tax front: abolishing capital gains tax is the obvious step towards encouraging more savings and removing one of the worst distortions. But there is also much that the City could do

to spread awareness of the different ways in which the risks of equity investment can be managed. The underlying challenge is ultimately a commercial one. People will invest more in shares, as with any other good, if they are persuaded that it is in their interests to do so.

What confuses the issue in most of the debate is the distinction between buying individual shares and buying a collective investment such as a unit trust or investment fund. For many investors, a fund managed by someone else is the best way to invest in the market. It gives them the benefit of diversification and the chance to delegate the management of their money to someone whose full-time job it is. The main problems are how to pick the right fund for their needs, and how to avoid paying too much in charges.

The issue of whether people should pick their own shares and handle their own portfolios is a quite distinct one. I share, with many professional investors, the view that there is no reason why individual investors should not produce better results than most so-called professionals. Private investors of this kind have many inherent advantages.

They do not have to pay their own management fees and overheads. They can afford to take a long-term view, and to sit out the market if they wish. And so on. But individuals are only likely to be able to profit from these advantages if they are prepared to put some time and effort into handling their investments – and not all of us are able or willing to do so.

Big Bang for two building societies

What will N&P's merger with Abbey National mean for customers? Ken Welsby reports

The busy bee has buzzed its last. As the merger of National & Provincial with Abbey National takes effect tomorrow, the building society's familiar logo will disappear from the streets.

Although all N&P branches – and cash machines – are closed to customers until Monday morning, an army of more than 1,200 people is working round the clock to make the merger happen: installing new computer systems and replacing the busy bee with Abbey's familiar red umbrella.

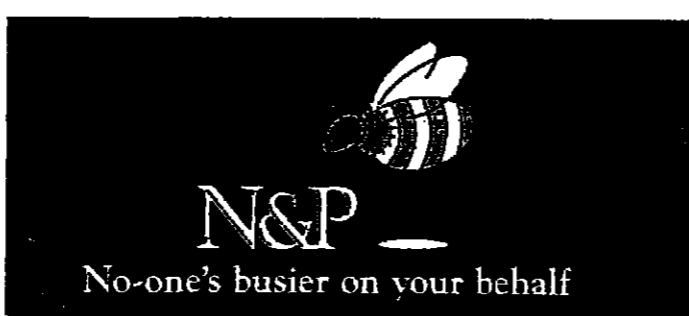
It is the first time a "Big Bang" of this kind has been attempted. The previous big building society merger, of the Leeds and Halifax, involved an overnight change of corporate identity, but consolidation of accounts and systems has been phased over almost a year.

When N&P branches closed their doors at 5pm last night, staff had two hours in which to balance their accounts before the computer network shut down. Engineers started arriving soon afterwards, installing new PCs and printers which are being linked to the Abbey network over the weekend.

Meanwhile gangs of contractors are visiting every branch to install new signs: in many cases the new name-boards are already in place, hidden by temporary N&P signs which can quickly be pulled down.

About 100 N&P and 10 Abbey branches have closed, with accounts transferring to another office nearby. No staff are being made redundant as a result of the merger, since both organisations have frozen recruitment since last year's announcement of the link-up.

The marriage, which involves the transfer of assets worth £13bn, has taken 55 weeks to consummate. But the climax, so far as most N&P customers are con-



Buzzing off: National & Provincial's bee will disappear

cerned, is still a few weeks away: the payout, worth at least £500 in shares or cash, does not come until the end of the month.

Some long-serving N&P staff and loyal customers are dismayed at the end of the society's independence, and the switch from membership of a mutual to being customers and shareholders of a plc. But they can find some reassurance in the fact that Abbey's roots and culture have grown from the same soil: the 19th century building society movement.

The early building societies were exactly what the name suggests: groups of local people who clubbed together to raise money for building homes of their own. N&P traces its origins back to the Bradford Third Equitable Benefit Building Society, founded in 1864, and incorporates half a dozen other societies dating back to the same period.

Abbey National was created in 1944 by the merger of the Abbey Road and National building societies. Established in 1849, the National's chief object, according to the first prospectus, was to qualify members to vote at elections, which at the time required ownership of freehold land worth 40 shillings a year.

Today about 45 per cent of

Abbey's shares are held by private investors, rather than institutions, and this proportion will increase to almost 50 per cent following the merger. The scale of this shareholding, unique among financial institutions in the UK, results from the decision taken in 1989, when Abbey converted from a building society to a bank and floated on the Stock Exchange, to offer shares to members only, and not to corporate investors.

There's comfort also to be drawn from Abbey's financial performance. At the time of conversion, members received 100 free shares, worth £130 at the time. Today those shares are worth

more than £560, and dividend payments to date have been worth another £100-plus.

Some N&P savers will benefit from better interest rates than those currently offered by the society. On Tessa accounts, for example, Abbey offers higher rates than N&P for amounts over £8,400.

Those with mortgages over £60,000 will pay a slightly lower rate: while N&P's standard variable rate was 7.04 per cent, Abbey charges 6.99 per cent for mortgages from £60,000 to £99,999 and 6.94 per cent over £100,000.

Abbey's personal loans are cheaper – a full percentage point less than the N&P rate for loans over £5,000. Visa card holders will see their monthly interest rate cut from 1.63 per cent to 1.52 per cent, or 1.38 per cent for balances over £1,000.

The other group to benefit will be N&P customers with Max or Instant Access accounts. In place of their existing ATM card they have new Electron cards which can be used as debit cards for payment in shops as well as to make withdrawals from the "hole in the wall".

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Sears	in store	1.94	25.90	2.20	29.80

Income Bonds	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months	18 months	24 months
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First Option Bonds		12 months	£1,000	£20,000	6.00%	Maturity
Pensioners' Guaranteed Income Bond	Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00%	Month	
NIS Certificates (tax-free)	43rd issue	5 year	£100	5.35%	Maturity	
	9th Index linked	5 year	£100	2.50-yr	Maturity	
Children's Bond	Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75%	Maturity	

past only F fixed rate
net rate A All withdrawals subject of 30 day loss of interest
rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01692 500677 1 August 1996



and upfront giveaways, whereas discounts on the standard variable rate come out of cash flow. Next to come under review will be remortgage deals offered to tempt customers of other

At the same time the competition for savings from pensions, insurance and other financial products will also rise. Savings rates must rise, and borrowers will have to pay for them.

Money Marketing, 23rd November 1995.



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Blocks of flats can mean high income

Ground rents from property freeholds are an overlooked investment opportunity, says Isabel Berwick

You may well feel that being a landlord, or worse still a freeholder with leaseholders at your mercy, is lower down the ethical scale than buying shares in BAT or British Energy. But you could get an income of up to 12 per cent a year if you invest in the freeholds attached to blocks of flats.

Freeholds aren't hard to buy. There are several million leasehold flats in England and Wales and all have a freeholder. An informal market has existed for years, with desirable groups of freeholds being bought and sold privately among the small group of professional landlords who dominate the market. Some freeholds are also sold at property auctions.

The easiest way for private investors to buy freeholds is through one of the two offshore unit trusts dedicated to ground rents. The trust managers buy up freeholds, then pay another company to maintain the property and deal with the tenants. The unit trust makes most of its money from the ground rents paid by all tenants.

Investors have the security of knowing their money is backed by bricks and mortar: tenants who fail to pay up will lose the right to live in their homes, and the trust will take possession. Although ground rents are usually fixed at only £50-£100 a year, the freeholds only change hands for around 10 times the annual ground rent. So a freehold on a flat with a ground rent of £50 a year might cost £500 to buy, giving a 10 per cent annual yield.

Venture capitalists Close Brothers back the biggest ground rent fund, the BESSA Income Trust - a smaller one is run by Neil Clark. Close's marketing manager, David Sherman, says: "We say ground rents and gifts should form 5-10 per cent of any portfolio, as a safety-first foundation." They recommend ground rent investments for anyone needing a high income with low risk. And income is paid gross, so non-taxpayers won't have to reclaim income tax.

Around £3.8m has been put into the fund since it was set up three years ago. There's a 6 per cent charge on your initial lump sum - a minimum of £1,000 - but the annual income has been as high as 11.5 per cent a year, although in the last financial year it was 9.4 per cent.

One reason you probably haven't heard about this type of investment is that the open market in ground rents is very small. More importantly, the two trusts are barred from advertising direct to the public because they don't offer any consumer protection if things go badly wrong. City watchdog rules state that a financial adviser has to approve and sign your investment application, to show that you



Flatland: There are several million leasehold flats in England and Wales, and all have a freeholder. Freeholds for blocks like this one are sometimes bought and sold

are aware of the risks you're taking on.

In fact the funds are very safe because they are backed by property investment. But potential investors should be aware that these trusts don't just make money from fixed-rate ground rents. The fund managers will act like all commercial landlords and take advantage of recent changes to the law to make money from selling lease extensions and freeholds to their tenants. Many leaseholders are effectively held to ransom by freeholders once a lease drops below about 50 years. They can't sell their homes

because lenders don't like short leases. And at the end of a lease, they will fear eviction.

In both cases, the flat owners will be willing to pay well above the market price to extend their leases or buy the freehold. Extending the lease also means a new contract has to be negotiated, so freeholders can charge more ground rent for the next 90 years.

So far, the changes to the law haven't made any difference to ground rent investments. But both Conservative and Labour party policy is to introduce "commonhold" property owner-

ship. This would bring in a new form of ownership similar to that of American condominiums, where homes are bought outright but with common responsibility for the upkeep of the building. The Government has drafted a Bill due for the next parliament. But investors in freeholds have no need to panic. As the Bill stands at the moment, if landlords don't want to sell up, the law won't force their hand.

BESSA Income Trust: 0171 426 4000.
Neil Clark: 0171 734 4446.



LOOSE CHANGE

Yorkshire Building Society has launched a one-year Mutual Interest term account paying 6.25 per cent a year gross interest and targeted directly at investors in National & Provincial, which disappears into Abbey National on Monday morning. The Yorkshire will take cash, but it will also let investors sell Abbey National shares free of charge and reinvest the proceeds in the new account. Cash in the new account is locked in for a year but the 6.25 per cent rate is guaranteed for the rest of the year.

FirstMortgage Direct has launched a variable rate mortgage at 5.95 per cent with no fees and no redemption penalties, undercutting both the market leaders, Direct Line and Bradford & Bingley Direct. Call free on 0800-080088 five days a week.

Skipton Building Society's new three year discount mortgage offers a 3 per cent discount in year one, 2 per cent in year two and 1 per cent in year three below the standard variable rate, currently 6.84 per cent. There are no fees, unemployment insurance is free, only one insurance is compulsory and the loan can be transferred to a new property within the first five years without penalty. Call Freephone 0800-603010.

General Accident Life is offering a fixed-rate mortgage at 6.75 per cent guaranteed until January 2000. First-time buyers can borrow up to 95 per cent of valuation and add the £195 completion fee, valuation fee and mortgage indemnity premium to the loan. The early redemption penalty is six months' interest on loans redeemed before January 2001. Call freephone 0500-100200.

Black Horse Financial Services offers three new bonds, combining high returns, a link to stock market performance and a measure of capital protection. The Premier Lock-in offers return of capital over six years and 100 per cent of any growth in the FT-SE 100 share index, with any gain of 25 per cent locked in. The Premier Optimum Bond offers 140 per cent of any rise in the FT-SE, and 90 per cent of capital back if the index has fallen. The Triple Bonus Bond offers capital returned in full plus a 30 per cent fixed return and 10 per cent of any FT-SE uplift.

Going Places, the largest foreign currency sales network with 700 outlets, is offering 10 free leaflets covering each of the main holiday destinations, combining information and advice on what to take and when and where to change it.

Privilege Insurance, the direct motor insurer is launching Fleetmaster, a policy designed for smaller company car fleets of up to 20 vehicles.

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by Rich 8pm C4. How does it feel to be one of the most hated men in British football? Find out in this profile of agent, Eric Hall (7557).
5.50pm and **8.30pm** BBC1. A new six-part sitcom set in a Belfast garage which unfortunately fails to exploit Northern Irish humour: Star-Sean McGinley (3354).
9pm Important Dennis 10pm BBC2. The national showbiz correspondent and professional footballer Dennis Pennis (above) gets another outing with repeated and new clips (56489).

maginaire Irlandais 10pm R2. An Arts programme looking at the very big festival of culture that has been happening in France the last six months. Seamus McKee finds what the French made of it all.

ITV/Regions

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[illegible]

Perplexity

Mixed doubles:

Small starved dodge closes revenge praxds

This week's three connected answers each have two words. All you need do to find them is regroup the six words above into three sets of two, then rearrange the letters within each set. A Larousse Desk Reference Encyclopedia will be awarded to the first correct answer opened on 14 August. Answers to: Saturday Pastimes, the Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

20 July answers:

Hundred metres (scendeth murder); pole vault (value plot); Olympic Games (images comply).

Winner: Rowan Connell.

West won, cashed ♡Q and exited safely with another diamond. The ♣K did not all on the next round and the contract failed.

Would it not have been a good idea, once the first top card had failed to drop the mean, to give up a trump trick (possibly unnecessarily) by rading a low heart at trick three? You can see the point with at least two entries to dummy, South can now take two finesses in clubs and the contract will only fail when West holds both of the missing club honours. (If I had adopted this line, which seems to be the percentage play, I am quite sure that I would have found trumps 2-2 and West (in the club pictures)

RECOMMENDED VIEWING THIS WEEKEND
by Tina Ogle

by Tina Ogle



The Middle Ages Sat 6.30pm C4
Dancing In The Street Sat 9.15pm BBC2
Gray Sex Sun 9.00pm BBC2
The English Wife Sun 9.15pm ITV
Danny Boy - In Sunshine Or In Shadow Sun 11.15pm ITV



Cycling: men's individual trials
Sat 12.30pm BBC1

A great deal of newspaper has been taken up with weeping about Britain's relative failure in these Olympic Games and our position in the medal table somewhere near Belarus and Ethiopia. As the games come to a close, we have chances with Kelly Holmes in the 1,500m and Steve Backley in the javelin. But the man most likely to lift the gloom should be Chris Boardman (above). Fresh from the Tour de France, he competes in the men's individual time trial. A nation's hopes will be upon him as he tries to match the gold medal he won four years ago.

Eat Drink Man Woman
Sat 10.25pm C4

Before making *Sense and Sensibility*, director Ang Lee proved he had them both in spades by making *Eat Drink Man Woman*. Opening a new season of C4's *Picador* showcase, Lee's cleverly-realised, culinary comedy focuses on the impact of romance on the life of a close-knit family, led by widowed master chef Mr Chu (Shing Lung Lee). He explains the thinking behind his delightful, Oscar-nominated film: "I always thought it was ironic that every family exists because of sex, and yet it is precisely the topic of sex that families have the most trouble discussing."

BBC 1

- 6.00 ~~6.00~~ **Son of Sinbad** (Ted Tetzlaff 1985 US). Worse than average *Arabian Nights* adventure with Dale Robertson (33357).
- 7.30 **News, Weather** (8694999).
- 7.35 **The Raccoons** (R) (1244845).
- 8.00 **Olympic Breakfast**. Overnight action from Atlanta: the men's pole vault, the 3,000m steeplechase, the women's 10,000, the women's long jump and the women's shot put (S) (881390).
- 11.00 **Animalympics** (Steven Lisberger 1980 US). As if all the real sport weren't enough, here's an animated animal version (8686661).
- 12.15 **Cartoon** (3618241).
- 12.27 **Weather** (1004731).
- 12.30 **Olympic Grandstand**. Introduced by Sue Barker. 12.35 **Olympics** - Action from Atlanta as the Games reach their penultimate day. This afternoon's events include the men's individual time trial in cycling, plus canoeing, dressage and rhythmic gymnastics. 1.00 **News** 1.05 **Olympics** 2.20 **Racing** from Goodwood - The 2.30 **Vodac Nursery Stakes**. With commentary by Peter O'Sullivan, Julian Wilson and Jimmy Lindley. 2.35 **Olympics** 3.00 **Racing** from Goodwood - The 3.10 **Vodafone Nassau Stakes**. 3.15 **Olympics** 3.30 **Racing** from Goodwood - The 3.45 **Vodac Stakes**. 3.55 **Olympics** (S). See *The Big Race*, above (19304116).
- 5.10 **News, Weather** (5318155).
- 5.20 **Regional News and Weather** (3938086).
- 5.25 **Dad's Army** (R) (4722796).
- 5.55 **Big Break Triclist Special**. Snooker competition with Willie Thorne and Jimmy White, actor Paul Shane, and a mystery celebrity guest (S) (2254061).
- 6.25 **Pets Win Prizes** (S) (467932).
- 7.05 **Doc South**. Fun mountain-in-Chicago drama (S) (935374).
- 7.10 **The National Lottery Live** (S) (561951).
- 8.05 **Casualty** (R) (S) (556406).
- 8.55 **News and Sport, Weather** (Followed by *National Lottery Update*) (3278864).
- 9.15 **Olympic Grandstand**. 9.25 **Football** - Action from the men's final. 10.30 **Tennis/Volleyball** - Coverage of the women's tennis doubles final and the women's volleyball final. 1.15 **Athletics** - Live action from the final day of track and field. Including: 11.50 **Women's high jump** final. 11.55 **Men's javelin** final. 12.05 **Women's 4 x 100m relay** final. 12.20 **Men's 4 x 100m relay** final. 12.50 **Men's 1,500m** final. 1.15 **Women's 1,500m** final. 1.40 **Men's 5,000m** final. 2.15 **Women's 4 x 400m relay** final. 2.40 **Men's 4 x 400m relay** final. 2.55 **Basketball** - Live coverage of the men's final (S) (18284945).
- 4.25 **Top Secret Sydney** (Larford 1948 US). A military intelligence officer pursues outlaws who have murdered two soldiers (8849520).
- 5.55 **Top Secret Lassie and Neeka** (Dick Mader 1968 US). Dog goes to Alaska (2858366). To 6.00am.

BBC 2

- 6.00 **Open University: Engineering Mechanics** (190222). 6.25 **Concord Numbers** (3123357).
6.50 **Governments and Politics: Open Communities** (2051715). 7.15 **Open Access: Science Skills** (3482715). 7.40 **Rabbits and Chalk Grasslands** (1726282). 8.05 **The Other Virtuosos: Victorian Brass Bands** (5121959). 8.30 **The Gentile Sex? Representations of Gender** (22048).
9.00 **Children's BBC: Mighty Max**. 9.20 **Grade Hill**. 9.50 **Sweet Valley High**. 10.15 **The Z Zone**.
10.30 **Open University: Environmental Control** (5900574). 10.55 **Statistics** (8933796). * 11.20 **Putting Training to Work** (8900319). 11.45 **Open Menu** (191212).
11.50 **The Year of the Pica**. A celebration of the piers which once symbolised the classic British holiday (3693932).
12.20 **[REDACTED] The Tarnished Angels** (Douglas Sirk 1957 US). One of Sirk's bleakest films focuses on Rock Hudson as a reporter in Depression America who becomes fascinated with the lives of a group of stunt fliers (839425). *
1.50 **[REDACTED] The Lawless Breed** (Raoul Walsh 1952 US). Rock Hudson again, this time as an outstanding father who is trying to guide his son away from a life of crime in the time of the Depression (3563406). *
3.10 **[REDACTED] This Earth Is Mine** (Hester 1959 US). Yet more Rock Hudson in this soapy drama set in the Californian vineyards of the 1930s (10072845). *
5.10 **Olympic Grandstand**. Sue Barker introduces further coverage from Atlanta, including the men's tennis singles final live. There is also action from the boxing finals and live reports from the men's and women's individual time trials in cycling. Plus, finals in canoeing, individual dressage and women's volleyball (S) (57523116). *
9.15 **Dancing in the Street: A Rock and Roll History**. 10.15 **Open Menu**. See *Preview*, above (S) (766834). *
10.15 **Talkin' Out the Asylum**. Re-run of Donna Franceschild's breathalizing and Bafta award-winning drama, set in a mental hospital. Tonight's episode focuses on Angus McFadyen as serial escapee, Fergus (R) (S) (2762883). *
11.05 **[REDACTED] A Soldier's Tale** (Larry Parr 1988 NZ). Gabriel Byrne stars as a British Second World War soldier who is trying to protect a French woman accused of collaboration (925357).
12.40 **Later with Jools Holland**. Another diverse mix of live music. Oasis perform "Wonderwall" and Stade's "Cum On, Feel the Noise", and David Bowie reinterprets "The Man Who Sold the World" and "Hello Spaceboy". Plus, performers from Day, Papa Wemba and Aziz, cameras on Roddy Frame (Followed by *Westworld*) (R) (S) (5358346). To 1.55am.
REGIONS: Wales. 11.05pm **Double Exposure**. 11.45 **Film: A Soldier's Tale**. 1.20 **Later with Jools Holland**. 2.30 **Westworld**.

ITV1 london

- 6.00 GMTV (44368680).
- 9.25 Scratchy & Co (S) (62208222).
- 11.30 The City Show (S) (67970).
- 12.30 Mad Science (41661).
- 1.00 News and Weather (24332241). *
- 1.05 London Today (24331512). *
- 1.10 Movies, Games and Videos (83686406).
- 1.40 James and the Giant Peach. Behind the scenes at the making of the film based on Roald Dahl's children's book (58318609).
- 2.10 Airwolf. More helicopter grief for all-American hero Hawke (R) (4761929).
- 3.00 Thunder in Paradise (S) (1254796).
- 3.55 RedCap (S) (1639590).
- 4.50 News and Weather (2180319). *
- 5.05 London Tonight (Followed by *LWT Weather*) (2362932). *
- 5.25 Beandler's About (S) (4717864). *
- 5.55 Man O'Man. Watch 10 grown men make utter fools of themselves. So what's new? (S) (615222). *
- 6.55 You Bet! Darren Day and Diane Youdale are joined by guests Toby Anstis, Billy Pearce and Jerry Powell in this awful challenge show (S) (926628). *
- 7.55 *LWT Weather, Lottery Result* (Followed by *LWT Weather*) (555390).
- 8.10 The Big, Big Talent Show. Jonathan Ross with members of the public hoping to become second-rate celebs (S) (571715).
- 9.00 A Touch of Frost. David Jason is excellent as the rumpled detective who this week is called upon to investigate the death of a drug addict who drowned in a public toilet. Where does he get those anoraks? With David Jason and Bruce Alexander (R) (S) (7086). *
- 11.00 *BL* The Nightman (Charles Hald 1991 US). Routine fare which bills itself as an erotic thriller. Maggie Bissell was only 17 when her father was murdered and she run-down seaside motel by the man they both loved. Now, 18 years later, he is out on parole, and Maggie is convinced that he is following her. Starring Joanna Kerns, Jerry Robertson and Ted Marcoux (S) (629661). *
- 12.45 *BL* *Straker - the King of Jazz* (Hal Needham 1990 US). Dire spin-off from the dire TV series. But Reynolds stars as a private detective, who is reunited with an old friend, now a Special Agent with the FBI. However, the pair come to blows as they team up to hunt down some terrorists (Followed by *ITN News Headlines*) (S) (452988).
- 2.25 American Gladiators (S) (8661810).
- 3.15 *ET* News Review. Entertainment news from Hollywood (Followed by *ITN News Headlines*) (R) (8778278).
- 4.55 God's Gift (R) (6419346).
- 4.58 Cool Vibes (S) (65449292).
- 5.05 Coach (S) (3958839).
- 5.30 News (42907). To 6.00am.

Channel 4

- 6.00 *Sesame Street*. With Kevin Kline (R) (57777).
- 7.00 *The Magic School Bus* (R) (S) (55951).
- 7.30 *The Ferals* (S) (74086).
- 8.00 *Gaelic Games*. The Ulster Football Final, where the 1994 All-Ireland champions, Down, take on Tyrone (51319).
- 9.00 *The Morning Line*. Today's racing preview (S) (36154).
- 10.00 *High Five*. The addictive sport of Base Jump (S) (41151).
- 10.30 *The Northumberland All Terrain Marathon*. Running from Lindisfarne to the mainland, presented by Christine Boxer (S) (20680).
- 11.00 *Tears World Sport* (50406).
- 12.00 *Rawhide* (2288951).
- 12.55 **REEL** *The Hamilton Woman* (Alexander Korda 1941 US). Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier in a proficient dramatisation of the affair between Lord Nelson and Emma Hamilton, trollop of her time (3672099)*.
- 3.20 **Channel 4** *Racing from Newcastle*. Derek Thompson introduces the 3.05 EBF Cleeve Canterday Maiden Stakes, the 3.35 Ye Olde Oak Hurdle Stakes, the 4.10 Hero Lute Stakes, the 4.40 NGR Spark Hurdle Stakes (S) (80013715).
- 5.05 **Broadcast Omnibus**. Max and Susanah walk pale with horror when they discover the incestuous secrets of Nat and Georgia (R) (S) (2202086)*.
- 6.30 **The Middle Ages**. Ray Gosling asks mid-wifery how they cope. See *Preview*, above (S) (80).*
- 7.00 **Channel 4 News and Weather** (958203).
- 7.10 *Europe on the Road*. First in a new series about European views reports from France. Christine Ockrent goes to a cider festival in Brittany while Guilaine Chenu reports on Chirac's presidency (S) (669661)*.
- 8.00 *My Night with Handel*. Handel biographer Jonathan Keates narrates this musical document recording some of the composer's most beautiful arias. Featuring the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (S) (5241)*.
- 9.00 **ERT**. Heart problems and a shooting occupy the gorgeous docs (R) (S) (649661)*.
- 9.55 **Pal Merton** - the Second Series (R) (S) (472574)*.
- 10.25 **REEL** *Eat Drink Man Woman* (Ang Lee 1994 Taiwan). From the man who went on to direct *Sense And Sensibility* comes this beautiful bitersweet comedy. Sihung Lung is the widowed master chef who tries to understand and contain his three adult daughters through the rituals of food. In Chinese with English subtitles. See *Big Picture*, above (S) (34899319).
- 12.45 *The Legend of the Four Kings* (S) (781520).
- 1.45 *The Twilight Zone* (58162).
- 2.15 *Full Frontal* (73471).
- 2.45 *Squawktalkie* (R) (S) (72742)*.
- 3.15 *Dweests* (S) (79655). To 3.45am.

ITV/Regions

- ANSLA**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (41651), 1.10 Film: Dances With Wolves (48373664), 3.00 Airwolf (12547961), 5.15 Cars and Customs (4988852), 12.45am Film: The Ordinal of Bill Carney (192064), 2.35am American Gladiators (5800471), 3.25am Film: South Rising (253510), 5.00-5.30am International Touring Cars (19384).
- TIME TYPE/WORKSHIRE**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games & Videos (41651), 1.10 Thunder In Paradise (595964), 2.05 Carbon Time (8177358), 2.40am Film: The Yul Brynner Yul (656139), 3.00am Airwolf (1989899), 5.10 Toys: Scoreline (3327970), 5.15 Cartoon (4988852), 12.45am Film: B. Stryker - Die Laughing (476566), 2.40am Film: The Ordinal of Bill Carney (192064), 3.00am The Works (6586891), 3.50am Comics Classified (3586461), 4.30am Murder, She Wrote (8477487), 5.20-5.30am Profile (3746636).
- CENTRAL**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games & Videos (41651), 1.10 Baywatch (7253396), 2.00 Airwolf (1989899), 2.45 Cars and Customs (4837366), 3.05 Film: The Captain's Table (47700628), 4.05am Jobindar (8591758), 5.20-5.30am Asian Eye (3746636).
- RITV**
As London except: 12.30pm What No Naked Films (41651), Wales: Tribe (41651), 1.10 House (6531951), 1.45 Movies: The Ordinal of Bill Carney (192064) & the Giant Brawl (4121085), 2.50 Film: Casey's Shadow (91221390), Wales: TFI News, Weekend Weather (2180319), 1.10 Wales: Let's Go (3327970), 1.15 Cartoon Time (4988852), 2.40am Film: The Ordinal of Bill Carney (192064), 2.55am American Gladiators (5800471), 3.25am Film: South Rising (253510), 5.00-5.30am International Touring Cars (19384).
- MEERDAW**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games & Videos (41651), 1.10 Film: The Ordinal of Bill Carney (192064), 2.00 International Touring Cars (48318609), 2.10 Sunbimmers (4761929), 3.00 Airwolf (1254796), 5.15 Cartoons (4988852), 12.45am Film: The Ordinal of Bill Carney (192064), 2.35am American Gladiators (5800471), 3.25am Film: South Rising (253510), 5.00-5.30am International Touring Cars (19384).
- WESTCOUNTRY**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games & Videos (41651), 1.10 The Making of Twister (6831951), 1.45 Film: The Treasure of Malacomb (39784715), 3.50 Airwolf (1673660), 12.45am Film: The Ordinal of Bill Carney (192064), 2.35am American Gladiators (5800471), 3.25am Film: South Rising (253510), 5.00-5.30am International Touring Cars (19384).
- S4C**
As C4 except: 7.05am Magic School Bus (3453203), 10.30 Northumbrian Challenge All Terrain Mountain Bikes (3453203), 11.00am The Sport (50406), 12.00 The Avengers (2288551), 3.20 Cartoon & Racing (8801317), 5.05 Brooksride (2202086), 6.30 City Meets World (800), 7.00 Newsworld (192064), 7.10am The Sports Patch: Live (800964), 8.00 Expedition (4988852), 8.30am Cyrrus, Bro Dinefwr (624), 9.00 True Stories: Experiment of the Cross (2777), 10.00 Film: Point of View (252672), 12.00am Go to Archipelago (3831433), 1.10am The Ordinal of Bill Carney (192064).

Radio

Radio 1

- Radio 1**
01.58 *Breakfast* 7.00am Kevin Greening 10.00am Dave Pearce 12.30p Danny Baker 2.30 Jo Whalley 5.50 John Peel 7.00 Lovegrove Dance Party with Danny Rampling 9.00 Radio 1 Rap Show 12.00 *Radio 1* 1.00pm *Dancehall* 1.30 *Essential Mix* Fearless and Carter 4.00-6.00am Charlie Jordan
- Radio 2**
03.40 *2am* 6.00am Mo Dutta 8.05 Brian Matthew 10.00 Steve Wright's *Saturday Show* 10.00 *Talking Country* 12.00 *Radio 2* 1.00pm *The Show* 2.00 Judi Spiers 4.00 Nick Bomacough 5.00 *Reading Music* 6.00 *Celtic Swing* 7.00 Ned Sherrin's *Review of Revue* 7.30 *Sherrin's Magic* 9.30 David Jacobs 10.00 Sheridan Morley 12.05 *Charles Noe* 4.00-6.00am Mo Dutta
- Radio 3**
03.72 *Radio 3* 7.00am *Musical Europe*. 9.00 *Proms News*. 9.30 Humphrey Burton's *Masterclass* 12.00 *Off the Record*. Anthony Payne blind tastes recordings of Mozart's Piano Concerto No 21 in C, K467. 'Plus a report in *the Guardian* on the British harm jam set of a regular lecture on recording venues, a look at the second-hand market, and a discussion of the creative activities of large and small record labels. Presented by Robert Cowen. 1.00 *News*. Placido Domingo. In a performance only possible in the recording studio, Domingo conducts and sings. Accompanied by the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House. Introduced by Michael Oliver. John Strauss (son): Die Fledermaus. Cast includes Peter Seifert, Igor (Gabriel van den Bruggen), Ildar (Graham Ross), Soprano (Renee), Kugel (Kudyl, bass (Frank), Agnes Baltas, mezzo (Prima Orlofsky). Savarian Radio Chorus, Munich Radio Orchestra/Placido Domingo (3/5).
- 3.25 Youth Orchestras of the World**
5.00 *Jazz Record Requests*. 5.45 *Proms Documentary*. George Michael. Harpsichordist, pianist, accompanist and conductor George Michael is one of the most quietly pre-eminent figures in British postwar musical life. 8C *Radio 3* 1.00pm *Concert at the Royal Albert Saturday for the*



Choice

Steve Nallon (left), who used to make a nice living as a Thatcher impersonator, reflects on the ficke nature of Fame (10am R4) with help from fellow 15-minute Luke Goss. Meanwhile, Seamus Heaney kicks off a new series of Poetry Proms (8.25pm R3) with readings from *The Spirit Level*, his first collection for five years.

- first time since 1977, and spoke to Andrew Green about his long career.
- 6.30 The Beebwen Cello
Sally Benson, Rebecca Cello
Ally, Rigel, Violins (piano),
Britten: Sonata, op 65.
Beethoven: Sonata in G minor
op 5 No 2. (2/5).
- 7.30 The Beebwen Cello
Sally Benson, Rebecca Cello
Ally, Rigel, Violins (piano),
the Royal Albert Hall, London
European Union Youth Orchestra
Conc. Conducted: Colin Davis.
Stravinsky Don Juan. Elgar Enigma
Variations. Schubert: Sonata
No 2 (Including at 8.25)
Poetry Prints. See Choice).
- 9.50 Books Abroad. (2/5).
- 10.00 The Evening News.
- 1.00 Boris Ufankin.
2.00 Violin Sonatas.
3.00 Beebwen.
5.00 Seasonal.
5.55-7.00am Open University
- Radio 4**
- 6.04am BBC News. 1535z: UK
6.27am News Briefing.
6.30am 10 Farming
6.45 Prayer for the Day.
6.55 Weather.
7.00 Today.
7.58 Weather.
9.00 News.
9.05 Sport on 4.
9.30 Britain Today.
10.00 News: Fame, Remember
Name. With the help of stars
and star makers, including Lu
Goss, Nigel Dextrous, Hugh
Goss, Nigel Dextrous, Hugh
Goss and Joyce Nicks, my son
and I have been unable to discover
the best way to become famous
(1/2). See Choice.
- 10.30 The Lupton Test. (3/4).
- 11.00 News: The Eurocrisis.
11.10am The Eurocrisis.
While travels to Brussels to
plore the mysterious workings
of the European Commission
and meet the key players who
know the inside story of the
best way (1/4).
- 11.30am From Our Own Correspondent.
Now in our 41st year of

bringin
colour

corresponds around the world.
 12.00 Inside Money. (4/6).
 12.25 On Baby Street. Comedy drama by Peter Award-winning comedienne Jenny Eclair and Julie Ballock. (3/5).
 12.55 Weather.
 1.00 News.
 1.00 In the Dock. Banks. (2/5).
 1.55 Morning Forecast.
 2.00 News; Vanishing Heymeadows.
 2.30 Saturday Playhouse: *Hotel Du Lac*. Anita Branson's 'Pride-and-prejudice' novel, dramatised by Ayshe Relf, in which a refuge for the aged is disgraced because an unlikely setting for a romance. Starring Barbara Flynn, Jack Kleaf and Joan Sims.
 4.00 News: What I...? Bonnie Prince Charlie. Christopher Anderson talks to historians Jeremy Black and Diana Preston about the possibly the most historical consequences of Bonnie Prince Charlie refused to retreat on 5 December 1745. What effect would a Stuart dynasty have had on England in 1941.
 4.30 Science Now.
 5.00 File on 4.
 5.40 Tidal Talk from the Rock Pool. (2/6).
 5.55 Evening Forecast.
 5.55 Weather.
 6.00 Six O'Clock News.
 6.25 The Sunday Format.
 6.50 Divided by a Common Language. (6/6).
 7.20 Kaleidoscope Feature. With a number of recent novels offering new perspectives on the slave trade, American film-maker and author Stephen D'Alugar, David Dabrydeen and Philippa Gregory, who have taken up the challenge of writing about slavery.
 7.50 On These Days.
 8.50 Sunday Night Theatre: *His Last Box*. Wisteria Lodge.

Satellite

SKY ONE
7.00—

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Every morning the cycle begins again: a hard-to-break round of indulgence

Simon Calder paid £60 for a four-day break to see the world — Butlin's SouthCoast World, that is



'Protection from wind, privacy and reasonable access to London' — that's why George V took his holiday in Bognor

Photograph: Andrew Hasson

On the first circuit of the second day, I was banned. Head hung low enough to avoid the pitying glances darting across the Tarmac from the real boy racers (average age 13), I was ordered from the go-kart track for the crime of overtaking on the last lap, and warned to stay away all day. And all because, I told myself in the hard-done-by manner of Linford Christie, the overtaking was dawdling like an off-duty milk-float.

Ritual humiliation had a couple of advantages. One was that I would stop burning up my cash at about the same rate as the tyres, since the race-track is about the only attraction for which an extra charge (£2) is levied. The second was that I would have to break out of the cocoon-like chutes of the holiday camp — sorry, the holiday village called SouthCoast World, the glitzy jewel in the crown of the Butlin's organisation.

If the British holidaymaker has a patron saint, it should be Billy Butlin. Indeed, photographs of the founder are splashed around the place as if he were a minor deity. In a sense, he is. The fact that those of us fortunate enough to be employed enjoy paid holidays is partly thanks to his zeal.

In the 1930s, he lobbied energetically, and ultimately successfully, for universal paid holidays. His motives were not entirely philanthropic, because he had plans for the first holiday camp

at Skegness. He needed holidaymakers. And working people — suddenly finding themselves with both the time and money to take holidays — needed him. Sixty summers ago, mass-market holidays were born, and most of the infrastructure bore the Butlin's brand.

Having shown how bracing all-inclusive holidays in Skegness could be, soon-to-be-Sir Billy searched out suitable locations to repeat the trick. Some were easy: Ayr, Pwllheli, Minehead, all now re-invented as Worlds of various kinds. But for the South Coast, he had to find somewhere stylish enough to steal trade from Margate and Southend, the established bolt-holes for sun-seeking Londoners. Where better than Bognor, then (and now) 100 minutes by train from the capital? A place of regal pedigree, together with a vital stretch of shoreline free of Victorian villas.

The royal connection began across town in the tranquil village of Aldwick, now a suburb of Bognor. Well beyond lager-can throwing range from the Swinging Shillelagh pub (favoured drinking venue among the SouthCoast World sophisticates), Aldwick was where George V convalesced from tuberculosis in 1929. He chose it for its "protection from wind, privacy and reasonable access to London." After a four-month stay, His Majesty conferred upon the town the municipal equivalent of a knighthood: the right

to append "Regis" to a name which is so nearly an anagram of Boring.

On his deathbed, the monarch reneged with the terminal alliteration "Bugger Bognor". But among punters at SouthCoast World you are unlikely to hear such language, or indeed the invocation "Sod off Skegness". Everyone is having too good a time. The only time I heard raised voices or expletives was on the macho proving-ground that is the karting track.

SouthCoast World, the setting for achieving true delight, takes a bit of getting used to. Were the "holiday village" really a West Sussex hamlet, the county authorities along in Chichester would have bulldozed it years ago. The visual appeal is commensurate with, say, a 1970s light industrial park. Of course, it is just that: a factory for creating human happiness.

The urban hub of the Butlin's metropolis is a series of sheds housing restaurants, amusement arcades and shops. If you are on a £60, four days' half-board deal, your breakfast and dinner will be in the Goodwood restaurant. Or, as the only sign I saw of class discrimination revealed, the Goodwood Budget restaurant. Everyone else got tablecloths and waitresses; we skimped made do with self-service and Formica. The food had its roots in school dinners via hospital kitchens, but no one went hungry.

Careful on that grease-with-everything break-

fast. Most of the activities require a strong constitution. At Waterworld, a vast and very blue indoor swimming pool, infants can take a few tentative paddles while their elder siblings are surfing through the artificial waves or spiralling down a waterslide. The funfair picks up the forces with a collection of high-grade, high-velocity attractions that spin you in most directions at once.

After dark, attention switches to a veritable barn of an entertainment complex. The mass appeal of the shows is pitched perfectly, in a manner that Sir Billy would applaud. The recipe is simple. Sell decent beer at less than £2 a pint. Lay on entertainers who can genuinely entertain: professional musicians as accomplished at Sinatra as Squeeze, dancers with more panache than Pan's People. Encourage everyone aged 18 and upwards to cram into a cavernous auditorium and turn the volume up loud. Easy, and effective.

After your senses have taken a day of hearty battering, you would probably be able to sleep anywhere. Fortunately, you don't have to. Even budget holidaymakers get a clean, comfortable chalet with a bathroom, television and tea- and coffee-making supplies.

Next morning, the cycle begins again — a hard-to-break round of indulgence. Having had mine broken so early in the day, I was

able to make the most of England's most overlooked county. The boundary commissioners may have pinched Brighton and left behind Crawley, but West Sussex retains a calm, unspoilt air of gentility, with blossoming villages in superb scenery. William Blake lived nearby; this was the green and pleasant site where he envisaged *Jerusalem*.

Head southwest along the coast towards Selsey. Through a patchwork of neat pastures, punctuated by doddery steeples, you emerge on the fringe of a wildlife reserve. Not a soul disturbs the wittering seabirds and whispering reeds, where the English countryside meets the English Channel. Selsey is the point at which the crunching gravel terrain gives out and subsides into the sea, with a High Streetful of tea shops offering shelter from a brusque breeze.

You could wander along the shore to dusk and beyond, but you would miss out on the endless entertainment back in Bognor. Butlin's is part of the Rank Organisation, and the connection with the movies is exploited in the on-site cinema. *Mission Impossible* was showing. Tom Cruise performed the sort of tricks that, if repeated at Bognor, would earn a lifetime ban from the go-kart track. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to go to Butlin's to lose your preconceptions.

Butlin's SouthCoast World: 01243 820202

As recent events have shown, airports need stringent security against the threat of terrorism. Some summers ago, I played a small part in the campaign by frisking passengers at Gatwick airport (NB: I was employed to do this by Securicor — it wasn't just a hobby).

The only exciting discovery I made was of a Camping Gaz cylinder in someone's hand luggage. If the pressure in the cabin had dropped too low, it could have exploded. So I was despatched with the cylinder to the far end of the apron to carry out a controlled release of the contents, and handed back the empty container to the far-from-cheery passenger.

Perhaps I was not sufficiently vigilant. Cecily Woolf of Brighton has just returned from Vancouver, minus her can of insect repellent. She warns: "Vancouver airport security are confiscating mosquito repellents and fly sprays on outgoing flights, on the grounds that they constitute 'toxic substances'. About 20 or 30 cans of spray are being confiscated daily from bemused passengers under the Canadian government's Aeronautics Act."

One of the security supervisors told Ms Woolf that the same procedure operates at other Canadian airports. "Although the regulations refer to all mosquito repellents as

toxic, he said he makes an exception for roll-ons, and allows them on board the aircraft. The confiscated items are given away annually to the Canadian public."

Although mosquitoes can be vile in Canada in summer, it seems a bit extreme to kit the locals out with repellents at the expense of tourists. A stick of Mosi-guard repellent (which carries a big NON TOXIC notice on it) if you can top Ms Woolf's tale by having had something even less offensive confiscated. And my apologies if you were the one at Gatwick with the Camping Gaz cylinder.

Fidel Castro is unlikely to be impressed by the new Thomson Faraway Shores brochure, which devotes a dozen glossy pages to holidays in Cuba. Britain's biggest tour operator has decided to inject some humour into its description of the cash-starved Caribbean island. So it points out that "One of Fidel Castro's names is 'the air hostess', because he's always asking the Cubans to tighten their belts."

Dr Castro will also be annoyed that prospective visitors to Cuba have become embroiled in US legislation aimed at tightening the economic boycott against the island. Thomson is refusing to sell holidays there



SIMON CALDER

because of the threat of legal action from Washington.

"It's all to do with the Cuban exile vote in the forthcoming American elections", says Charles Newbold, managing director of Thomson. "We and our customers can't get caught in a battle between the US and Cuba. So until the Foreign Office tells us it's OK to sell those holidays, we will wait."

Several other UK operators are continuing to sell holidays in Cuba, in defiance of Washington. Regent Holidays of Bristol has been sending British tourists to the island for 21 years, and at present has a couple of dozen customers in the western hemisphere's last bastion of communism. The company's managing director, Neil Taylor, says that Thomson has over-reacted. "I have enjoyed many holidays in the US, and plan to take many more in the future, gambling that the threat of

jail for dealing with Cuba is an empty one."

Mr Taylor says American belligerence against the island actually enhanced Cuban tourism prospects. "The US government bans their citizens from visiting Cuba, which gives it a sort of snob appeal."

So far, Dr Castro has not retaliated by issuing threats against holiday companies that trade with America.

Last weekend, the M5 was a mess. Traffic on the motorway south-west from Bristol to Devon and Cornwall tailed back for 25 miles. The front page story on the *Western Morning News* on Monday asked "Is this the way to treat our visitors?". But having tried to travel to Newquay by train, I suggest that the motorists stuck in the queues were the lucky ones.

Whoever devises the train schedules to Newquay must have a grudge against the resort, or rail travellers, or both. On Sunday I found myself in the City of London, needing to travel to Cornwall. I tried to call Great Western Trains, but the company that has taken over services to the West Country is not listed with Directory Enquiries; try dialling 192, ask for Great Western Trains in Paddington or Plymouth, Swindon or Swansea, and you will draw a blank. So instead I went to

nearby Liverpool Street station and bought a ticket to Newquay. It was 12 noon.

Unhappily, the last train of the day to Newquay left Paddington 15 minutes later. Without a helicopter, it is impossible to travel from Liverpool Street to Paddington in a quarter of an hour. So after lunch I caught a train as far as Par, and paid £20 for a taxi to cover the stretch to Newquay for which I had a redundant ticket.

For the return journey, I vowed to catch the first train, and woke at dawn. Newquay station was packed, mostly with foreign visitors heading to London. We arrived at the connecting station, Par five minutes before the Penzance to Paddington express was due, and waited expectantly.

There were plenty of empty seats — you could count them as the train sailed past without stopping. The non-connecting trains are operated by a different company. Perhaps the managers spend longer investigating the prospects for privatisation windfalls than on scheduling services to meet demand. Everyone settled down to an 80-minute wait for the next train. Most of the overseas tourists spent the time on the amenity-free platform planning their next holiday, probably to a country where the railways are not such a shambolic joke.



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A likely story

"Direct services from the regions to start in 1996"



The promise contained in the 1996 French Railways brochure has been broken. There is no likelihood of "new direct Eurostar services from Glasgow and Manchester to both Paris and Brussels, and from Birmingham to Paris" that the company says will begin this year. Rolling stock for the Paris services has been delayed. To Brussels, the train operators

are busy trying to fill existing services from London, without the problem of having to sell tickets on extra trains from Glasgow and Manchester to the Belgian capital.

No sign yet of the other great innovation in the French Railways brochure. The European Night Services linking London with Holland and Germany in the spring

Trouble spots:

Advice from the Foreign Office on avoiding danger zones in Europe and the Middle East. Call 0171-238 4503 for further advice

Corsica: "There have been several recent attacks on tourists, including two British-registered yachts. Yacht owners should seek advice from the harbourmaster on entering Corsican ports and should consider moving on if they do not obtain adequate assurances of security while in port."

Spain: "Those wishing to travel to Spain should bear in mind the

recent upsurge in terrorist attacks apparently aimed at tourists, but British tourists have not been singled out."

Bulgaria: "Recently the incidence of robbery with violence against foreigners has increased, particularly on trains and near Sofia's central railway station. Under no circumstances accept any food or drink from strangers as there is a risk it may be drugged."

Israel: "There have been terrorist incidents during the last few months in various parts of Israel, including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, particularly bomb explosions in buses and busy shopping areas and rocket attacks on northern Israel from the Lebanon."

Saudi Arabia: "Following the bomb explosion at Al Khobar on 25 June there have been press reports of a call by an Islamic

extremist for Britain and France to withdraw their military personnel from Saudi Arabia. In this context this could be taken as an implied threat."

Iran: "There have recently been a number of cases of tourists being asked for identification by bogus policemen, who have then made off with the visitor's wallet and currency. Keep passports separate from other valuables."

Bargain of the week

The Worshipful Company of Shipwrights does not crop up often in these pages. But the generosity of the guild could mean the trip of a lifetime for four young readers. It is offering four grants, worth £2,500, to allow sailors aged 18-25 to take part in the voyage of the ship *Endeavour*, a replica of Captain

Cook's vessel of discovery. In October, two places are available from Perth in Australia to Port Elizabeth in South Africa, and two more for the 12-week voyage to London starting in December. Young people with ocean sailing experience should call the National Maritime Museum on 0181-312 6790.

WORLD COVER

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BT agonises at eleventh hour on Oftel plans

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

The board of BT last night using up every minute of remaining time before taking one of the biggest decisions it has faced since privatisation 12 years ago. BT must decide whether to reject proposals by Oftel, the industry regulator, to take on new powers to ban anti-competitive behaviour, and face a risky and costly investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC).

For weeks the head of Oftel, Don Cruickshank, has been making it clear that rejection would mean an automatic referral to the MMC. BT's board, composed of four executive directors and nine non-executives, held a crucial meeting last Tuesday and was known to have made "some decisions", so the delay in reaching a final response yesterday left observers mystified.

Oftel has proposed changes to the terms of BT's operating licence, to give Mr Cruickshank the power to ban any behaviour by BT which would impede competition. He linked the changes to more generous four-year price controls, beginning next August, which have been broadly supported by BT. The new formula removes almost all business customers and some high-spending residential customers from price controls. The four-fifths of homes still covered by a price cap would see bills increase by no more than 4.5 per cent below the rate of inflation.

BT has fiercely opposed the fair trading proposals on the grounds that they include no right of appeal against Oftel's decisions. Late last year Sir Iain Vallance, the chairman, described the plans as "highly dangerous", arguing they would make Mr Cruickshank "judge and jury" over the company's affairs. Oftel insisted that the decision not to include a right of appeal was necessary because the new powers will not be backed up by a system of fines and compensation.

BT had hoped to persuade the Government to broker a compromise by amending the telecommunications legislation to include a formal right of appeal. The President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, is known to have considered the plea, though no decisions are thought to have been taken.

Another option open to BT is to seek a judicial review of Mr Cruickshank's plans. A number of lawyers have suggested BT would have a good case if it argues that Mr Cruickshank is exceeding his powers as a regulator. However, such a legal challenge would not "save" the company, as an MMC investigation could take place simultaneously.

Oftel's proposals have been strongly supported by consumer groups and many of BT's competitors. Hans Snook, the group managing director of Orange, the mobile phone company, said: "Not only are we in favour of the changes, but we are actively fighting for a level playing field with BT. We are highly supportive of anything which provides this."

Cable operators have welcomed the plans as they continue to allege BT is engaged in a so-called "dirty tricks" campaign to persuade ex-customers to return to the company. Bell Cable Media said it had received 15 complaints last month about the activities of BT's marketing team. In one instance, a representative allegedly told a potential cable customer they would no longer be included in telephone directories.

Wall Street cheered by jobs figures

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

America's financial markets yesterday celebrated the news that the economy's impressive pace of job creation slowed last month, reducing the risk of a rise in interest rates during the summer.

"There is no sudden emergence of weakness, but the market is cheered by the idea of a gradual slowing down in the economy," said Christopher Low, an economist at HSBC Markets in New York.

Not so President Bill Clinton. He had rushed to welcome Thursday's report of faster economic growth in the second quarter of the year, but did not comment on yesterday's employment figures.

There were 193,000 new non-farm jobs in July, not enough to prevent a small increase in the unemployment rate to 5.4 per cent. This compared with monthly employment increases well in excess of 200,000 during the past six months, which have triggered sharp rises in share prices on four occasions.

"An increase of 193,000 jobs isn't bad, but it is not over-riding. This has much reduced the likelihood that the Fed will raise interest rates," said Ian Harwood, international economist at Kleinwort Benson. The central bank's policy-making committee meets next on 20 August.

The Dow Jones index rose in reaction, up 56.60 points to 5,651.35 by late morning. The benchmark long Treasury bond soared to its highest level for four months, yielding 6.74 per cent.

The details of yesterday's monthly employment report were almost entirely reassuring as far as inflationary pressures are concerned. Average earnings per hour fell by 2 cents to \$11.50 (£7.65), partly chipping away the previous month's 9 cents jump. The annual rate of wage inflation has dropped back to just under 2.9 per cent. Average weekly hours fell slightly.

The job creation took place almost entirely in the service industries, especially retailing. It took on 89,000 people out of the total of 192,000 in services, about half of them in eating and drinking establishments. The Labor Department said the Olympic Games in Atlanta probably explained about 10,000 of the new posts, although much of the Olympic hiring would not show up until the August figures were published.

There were smaller rises in employment in construction and the public sector. But manufacturing shed 20,000 workers, confirming the evidence of Thursday's survey from the National Association of Purchasing Managers. It indicated an unexpected drop in the pace of expansion in manufacturing.

Other figures yesterday also pointed to a moderation in the pace of growth. New orders for manufactured goods fell 0.9 per cent in June. The drop would have been steeper but for an increase in military orders.

June also saw American consumers cut back on spending even though the month's increase in personal incomes was the biggest for more than a year. Incomes were up 0.9 per cent but spending fell by 0.2 per cent.

Hush Puppy disposed of in £19m deal as Saxone stores get new owner



Clarke's trademark: The Chancellor's brown suede shoes. Arnold Ziff has ruled out free pairs for their famous patron

Sears sells shoe chains to Stylo

NIGEL COPE

Sears has sold its Hush Puppy shoe chain to Stylo, the footwear retailer that owns the Barrett shoe shops, in a £19m deal. Sears is also paying Stylo a £8.75m reverse premium to take over 61 of the Saxone, Freeman Hardy Willis and Trueform stores that reverted to the company after the Facia retail empire collapsed into receivership in June. Sears said the two deals completed the reorganisation of its troubled footwear division.

Some 230 of the former Facia shops whose leases reverted to Facia remain in administration. Sears has appointed Healy & Baker to handle the sale. Stylo chairman Arnold Ziff said he was delighted with the deals, which include 119 of the 126 Hush Puppy stores. They confirm the company as Britain's third-largest footwear retailer behind C&J Clark and Sears, with more than 1,000 outlets.

"Hush Puppy is an excellent brand and gets some excellent PR because the Chancellor of the Exchequer wears them," Mr Ziff said. He added that he had no plans to give Kenneth Clarke free pairs of his trademark brown suede shoes to keep up the good publicity. "If he gives me a penny off income tax I might give him a pair. But we don't tend to give shoes away. We have a saying in Yorkshire, 'What costs now's worth now'."

Hush Puppy made profits of just £300,000 on sales of around £70m last year. Stylo recorded profits of £3.9m on sales of £175m last year. Stylo plans to refurbish the Saxone stores and revitalise the merchandise. It is planning to raise £15m through a placing and open offer of one new voting share for every three held, priced at 110p per share.

New banking facilities of £15m have been arranged to help fund the integration. Mr Ziff said Saxone had great potential but had been allowed to drift under previous owners. In a separate deal, Sears has sold the Hush Puppy wholesale business to a subsidiary of Wolverson Worldwide, which owns the Hush Puppy brand name.

Sears will not incur any additional provisions as a result of the deals. The £8.75m reverse premium for the Saxone stores is included in the £25m provision announced earlier this year. Comment, page 17

Porterbrook chief's 'hello' stirs fresh row

MICHAEL HARRISON

Sandy Anderson, the rail executive who stands to make £36.25m from the sale of the Porterbrook train leasing company, will receive a further £250,000 "golden hello" from his new employer Stagecoach, it emerged yesterday.

Mr Anderson, whose gigantic windfall has provoked a fresh storm over privatised utility fat cats, and three other Porterbrook executives will share a £500,000 payment in exchange for signing new service agreements with Stagecoach.

The other Porterbrook directors set to receive joining fees are finance director Ray Cork, whose profit from the takeover will be £16.74m, and engineering director Tim Gilbert, who gets £10.7m from the deal.

The fourth Porterbrook executive sharing in the payment is Billy Wraith, who has 32,000 A shares and 32,000 new deferred shares, according to the Stagecoach offer document posted out to shareholders on Thursday.

The document shows Mr Anderson's current annual salary is £161,575. Mr Cork's is £79,040 and Mr Gilbert's £52,273. They bought shares in Porterbrook at the time of its management buyout from British Rail just seven months ago. The profit on their initial investment is estimated to be at least 500 per cent.

The Labour Party continued its attack on the "biggest privatisation scandal of them all", and warned its windfall utilities tax may be extended to privatised rail companies. Stagecoach, which already owns one passenger franchise, South West Trains, and is bidding for the remaining 12 on offer, saw its shares fall by 10p to 521p. The fall followed the 11.5p drop the day before.



Sandy Anderson: Stands to make £36.25m in takeover

The company's shares had jumped by more than 10 per cent when the controversial Porterbrook deal was first unveiled on Wednesday, but there are now fears it could be a prime target of Labour's punitive tax.

The Porterbrook takeover has still to be approved by the rail regulator, John Swift, and the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising. Both regulators are concerned about the impact of the deal on competition and the sale of rail franchises.

Stagecoach is paying £476m and assuming £350m of borrowings, valuing its offer at £826m. This compares with the £527m the Government received when the buyout took place in January.

The six directors and 44 staff of Porterbrook, whose 20 per cent stake was worth £15m at the time of the buyout, have seen the value of their holdings rise to £95.2m.

OFT snubbed over football review

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

The Restrictive Practices Court has rebuffed attempts by the Office of Fair Trading to accelerate a high-stakes review of broadcasting contracts for top-level football in the UK, it emerged yesterday.

The OFT, which had taken the Premier League and broadcasters including the BBC and BSkyB to court over the anti-competitive terms of their television contracts, had hoped to oblige all the parties to file their statements by mid-October at the latest. John Bridgeman, director-general of the OFT, had argued the public interest would be served by a swift resolution of the issues.

Lawyers for BSkyB and the BBC, as well as the Premier League of 20 top football teams, resisted the move, saying they should get the full three months provided by law before making their statements.

The review will now only get

under way in late November, and is unlikely to be decided until next year.

The delay could be useful to BSkyB and BBC, which hold the live and highlight rights to Premier League matches. The contract, signed in 1992, provides



John Bridgeman: Hoping for a swift resolution

exclusive rights until 1997, after which a second contract, already negotiated, kicks in.

The original £304m, five-year deal included a controversial right for BSkyB to meet the best offer from any competing broadcaster when the contract came up for renewal, although this clause has been dropped.

The OFT will ask the court to consider whether the Premier League is acting as a cartel in collectively negotiating broadcasting rights. The decision could have a huge effect not only on football but on other sports where rights are negotiated on a collective basis.

The Football Association is also a party to the court action, through its formal relationship to the Premiership. It is expected to argue that collective bargaining for rights is the only logical way to operate, and that any effort to insist that individual teams secure their own broadcast deals would lead to chaos. It is believed that some top

teams in the Premier League have pushed for the right to negotiate separately to maximise their broadcast revenues. Individual team rights could be worth considerably more once digital television and pay-per-view services are widely available, allowing viewers to choose which matches they want to see, and when.

Cable companies in particular have said they are interested in providing tailored services for top sport, using their ability to show programming region-by-region as the selling point.

The review of the Premier League deal was requested by the OFT late last year, at the same time as a wide-ranging review of BSkyB's dominant position in the £1bn pay-television sector was launched.

That led to revised informal undertakings from BSkyB on the terms of its supply of programming to the cable industry. Most observers said the undertakings were less onerous than necessary.

Battle for Kepit intensifies

JOHN WILLCOCK

The fight for the poorly performing £500m Kepit trust intensified yesterday as its manager, Kleinwort, proposed turning it into a unit trust. Kleinwort said this would be "very significantly cheaper" than Henderson Touche Kemnani's hostile liquidation bid.

Henderson immediately responded that it would press on with its own sell-off bid for Kepit, which it launched on Wednesday via TR European Growth investment trust.

Kepit's shares rose 1.75p to 92.75p, their highest level for a month but 10.4 per cent below their net asset value of 103.8p.

Kepit was launched two years ago to invest in formerly state-owned assets. In June, Kleinwort in effect admitted that the trust was too large and had suffered from a lack of suitable in-

vestments. It was trading at a discount to net assets. Kleinwort proposed to liquidate 60 per cent of the fund.

On Thursday, Kepit's board rejected the takeover approach from TR. Yesterday Ben Sidons, chairman of Kleinwort Benson Investment Trusts, said: "We believe that the Kleinwort proposals will cost less and be more orderly than the proposals from TR."

Kleinwort estimates it would cost TR £17m to liquidate the trust, while unitisation would be "very significantly cheaper".

Kepit is seeking to adjourn a meeting for shareholders and warrant-holders due next Tuesday to vote on its now defunct proposals made in June.

Kleinwort has bowed to shareholder disenchantment and wants to change Kepit from a closed-end investment trust into a unit trust.

STOCK MARKETS									
FT-SE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei		Hang Seng		Shanghai	
3770.80	+36.20	5957.10	+1.0	20900	+100	10961.97	+172.10	2508.65	+14.18
3740		5950		20800		10900		2500	
3740		5950		20800		10900		2500	
3740		5950		20800		10900		2500	
3740		5950		20800		10900		2500	
3740		5950		20800		10900		2500	
3740		5950		20800		10900		2500	
3740		5950		20800		10900		2500	
3740		5950		20800		10900		2500	

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond		Euro area		Japan	
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.12	7.12	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00

CURRENCIES									
Sterling		Euro		Yen		Dollar		Pound	
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.57	1.57	1.66	1.66	100	100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

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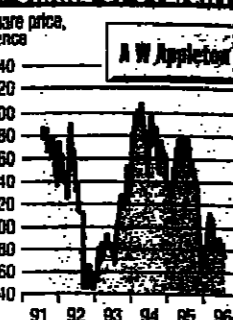
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SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Buyers return to Wall Street as rate hike fears recede

MARKET REPORT

PATRICK TOOHER

European bond and equity markets firmed on weaker-than-expected US employment data for July. US non-farm payrolls rose 193,000 in July, while average hourly earnings fell 0.2 per cent on the month compared with expectations of a modest rise. The figures soothed fears that a rise in American interest rates might be imminent, prompting buyers to return to Wall Street where early exchanges sent the Dow 50 points higher.

After a cautious start to trading, the Footsie quickly gathered momentum and closed at an intraday high of 3770.6, up 36.2 points.

Investors in London spent most of the day waiting to hear if BT, locked in mortal combat with industry regulator Ofcom over pricing and competition, would take its case to Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Against the market trend, the shares were under

selling pressure throughout the session and closed 4p lower at 364.5p in the absence of any developments.

Also weak was Rank, ahead of a strategic review due to be unveiled with interim results next week. The shares dipped 8p to 474p.

Another trading update, another profits warning from Anglo-French papers group Arjo Wiggins Appleton. Poor first-quarter sales figures prompted analysts to trim their full-year profit forecasts for the former Footsie stock by about £30m to £120m. The shares, which closed at 171p, have been in the shredder since Arjo warned in May of a poor first half and dealers shaved a further 3p off them yesterday.

New chief executive Daniel Mellin is in the middle of a strategic review that could involve the break-up of the group à la Hanson or British Gas. Selling Appleton, the US



papers business which generates the bulk of profits and cash, is one option.

Arjo's news also knocked shares in packaging group Rexam, 3p lower at 362p.

Sears slipped 1.5p to 98p after agreeing to sell its Hush Puppies retail business to Stylo and its Hush Puppies wholesale businesses to Wolverine World Wide for a total of £23m. Sears expects to make a £500,000 profit on the disposal.

Bid rumours continued to swirl around confectionery and soft drinks giant Cadbury Schweppes. The shares topped the list of best performing blue chips, adding 20p to 539p, as vague talk persisted that

Unilever might be interested. Banks, in the middle of their reporting season, were in demand again. Royal Bank of Scotland closed 16p ahead at 497p, while HSBC added 25p to 1116p. NatWest picked up 10p to 655p. HSBC James Capel set a 700p price target for the stock in the next three to six months. The house also reiterated its buy stance, saying the price does not take into account the potential for the bank's recent acquisitions - Greenwich, Gleacher and Garmore - and the benefits of recent cost-cutting measures which are beginning to flow through.

Mobile phones group Vodafone continued to recover

on the back of this week's presentation to investors. The shares dialled up a 7p gain of 240.5p.

Société Générale Strauss Turnbull turned positive on the building materials sector. In a report flagging the industry's interim results next month, the broker said the underperformance seen in the summer months has brought ratings down to attractive levels. The sector now stands at a 10 per cent discount to the market, yet much of the profit decline in the current year has been weather related while underlying conditions in the UK continue to improve steadily.

Pilkington, up 5p to 188p, Caradon 3p better at 205p, and RMC 5p weaker at 1035p, are all rated buys, while Tarmac, a halpenny higher at 100.5p, and Wolsley, 9p poorer at 420p, attract sell recommendations.

BPB Industries is also judged a sell, but the shares

rose 9p to 340p after the company's annual meeting was told profits and margins improved in the first quarter.

Soc Gen is more cautious about building and construction in general and AMEC in particular. Norwegian shipping group Kvaerner still retains a 25.9 per cent stake following last year's abortive bid and the broker thinks short-term price movements will be governed as much by further speculative interest as fundamentals. The shares fell 3p to 92p.

There was excitement in the world of accountancy software as Sage made a 42.5p share offer for Pegasus. Sage sagged 3p to 42.5p. Pegasus was steady at 413p.

Shares in Caspian made a storming return, closing 10p above their 18.5p suspension price, after its £16m offer for Leeds United football club went unconditional. Caspian claims 8.5 per cent of Leeds.

TAKING STOCK

It was a momentous day for AIM. The lightly regulated and junior market for small and growing companies welcomed its 200th company, entertainment software firm SCI Entertainment, by marking the shares up at 156p, a tidy premium to the 149p offer price.

Since AIM started with just 10 companies it has swelled on a high tide of new issues and total market capitalisation is above £4bn.

Shares in Burford, the acquisitive property group headed by Saracens rugby sugar-daddy Nigel Wray, advanced 7.5p to 131p.

It has paid £6.9m in cash for a 25 per cent stake in specialist retail warehouse firm Grantchester, which is being groomed for a stock market flotation later this year.

Alcoholic Beverages

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Banks

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Banks, Retail

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Building/Construction

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Building Materials

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Chemicals

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Electronics

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Engineering

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Food Manufacturers

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Gas Distribution

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Health Care

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Index-linked

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Undated

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Government Securities

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Mediums

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Longs

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Telecommunications

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Rights Issues

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Recent Issues

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Household Goods

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Insurance

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Leisure & Hotels

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Pharmaceuticals

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Printing & Paper

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Barclays	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Property

100	151	Swire	288	-	17	146	336
106	154	Sanchari Bnd	288	-	17	146	336
156	243	Spandan	385	-	10	234	439
332	263	Vardy Frg	308	+	27		534
59	325	Whitehall Pl	423	-	37		487
59	25	Wilsons	29	-	33	28	486
143	78	Wynn Gp	140	-	6		4547

Diversified Industrials

sport

Pneumonia ruins Cole's new start

Football
CLIVE WHITE

Andy Cole has contracted pneumonia and will be out for five weeks, thereby missing the start of the season. The former British record signing had seen his Manchester United career threatened by the possible arrival of Alan Shearer this summer, but now finds himself displaced by illness.

The £7m signing from Newcastle - the club who eventually secured the services of Shearer - had originally been thought to be suffering from bronchitis but that diagnosis turned out to be incorrect.

It is yet another blow for the 24-year-old, whose career since his move from St James' Park two seasons ago has been blighted by indifferent form and injury. His goal touch deserted him alarmingly, yet Alex Ferguson persevered with the player until, at the climax to the season, in the FA Cup final at Wembley, the United manager was forced to substitute him.

Had the Shearer move to United gone through, Everton were prepared to offer Cole the chance to resurrect his career.

Now his enforced absence provides his young deputy, Paul Scholes, with the opportunity to establish himself in the side.

Cole will not be on the only absentee today when United

face Ajax in the four-team Umbro tournament at Nottingham. Quite apart from Gary Pallister, Ryan Giggs, Nicky Butt and now Cole, it looks as if United will also be without their latest signing, Jordi Cruyff.

His clearance papers have been held up at the Spanish FA. "We've been trying non-stop to get his papers but it always seems to be manana over there," said Ferguson.

One player who seems sure to be there is Patrick Kluivert, the young Dutch international, for whom Blackburn Rovers yesterday denied making a bid. He is rumoured to be keen on a move to a British club, and United are among the clubs believed to be interested in the player, valued at about £10m.

Celtic and Alan Stubbs, their

new signing, were yesterday given fines totalling £70,000 by Fifa, world football's governing body, for using an unlicensed agent, Neil Ritchie, in the former Bolton defender's transfer to Parkhead.

In fine Celtic £42,000 and Stubbs £28,000, Fifa warned the Scottish Premier Division club that any repetition of the indiscretion could lead to a freeze on transfer activities.

Arsenal, who have been conspicuous by their lack of activity in the transfer market, have announced a pre-tax loss of more than £3.6m on last season. The club's commercial and retail profits were down by nearly £2m from £12.99m in the previous year while wages rose by more than £1m to £10.06m.

Peter Hill-Wood, the chairman, blamed the deficit on the club's absence from European football.

Terry Venables, the former England coach, has told Portsmouth that they must sort out their financial problems before he can consider joining them as part owner. "It will need a lot of cash to rejuvenate the club, which is just not there," he said.

"Hopefully things could change."

Meanwhile, along the south coast at Brighton, plans for a new stadium alongside a shopping complex at Toads Hole Valley have been rejected by the local council. The beleaguered Seagulls could still end up ground sharing with Portsmouth.



Cantona: United's new kit

When will Alan Shearer face Blackburn?

Who will Manchester United be playing over Christmas?

Who will Torquay face over Easter?

These and thousands of other vital questions about the forthcoming football season will be answered in Wednesday's Summer of Sport, when we publish the complete Premiership, Nationwide League and Scottish Premier Division fixtures for the 1996-97 season

Wallabies rely on Campese

Rugby Union

New Zealand have already secured the first Tri-Nations series with three consecutive wins. The loser of today's match between South Africa and Australia in Bloemfontein can expect to come last.

The Wallabies will rely on the world record try-scorer David Campese, making his 99th Test appearance, but miss Tim Ho-

ran and Joe Roff who are replaced by Daniel Herbert and Pat Howard.

The South African coach, Andre Markgraaff, is delaying naming his side until shortly before kick-off but injury has already robbed him of the experienced Natal pair of Andre Joubert at full-back and Henry Honiball.

Markgraaff also has to decide who to play at hooker. John Altan played in the first two Tests

but his place is under threat from Northern Transvaal's Henry Tromp. However, Tromp may be denied a first cap because of controversy over a conviction for assault after which a farm labourer died.

Tom Kiernan, chairman of the Five Nations Committee, has called a meeting of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and France to debate England's Five Nations future at a secret venue on Monday night.

But Fogarty is motorcycle-

clinging's great alchemist. Show him an unfamiliar machine and he will turn it into a world

beater. In 1992 he jumped on

to-master Castrol Honda

RC45.

"If I rode the Ducati this year I would have won the

championship by now, which sounds good but I wanted a

new challenge and I've got it,"

Fogarty said. "When I rode on the Ducati last year there were

six other guys on the same bike and I still beat them."

Fogarty, however, wins races by maintaining speed through

corners, which the V-twin Ducati is ideally suited. Its engine is higher and further

forward, putting too much weight over the front end, and leaving

those riders who brake hard into corners. Which suits Fogarty's

style. Complacency, no, but a touch perverse, perhaps.

Tomorrow, at Brands Hatch, it may come abundantly clear

just how, in 12 months, Fogarty's fortunes have taken a

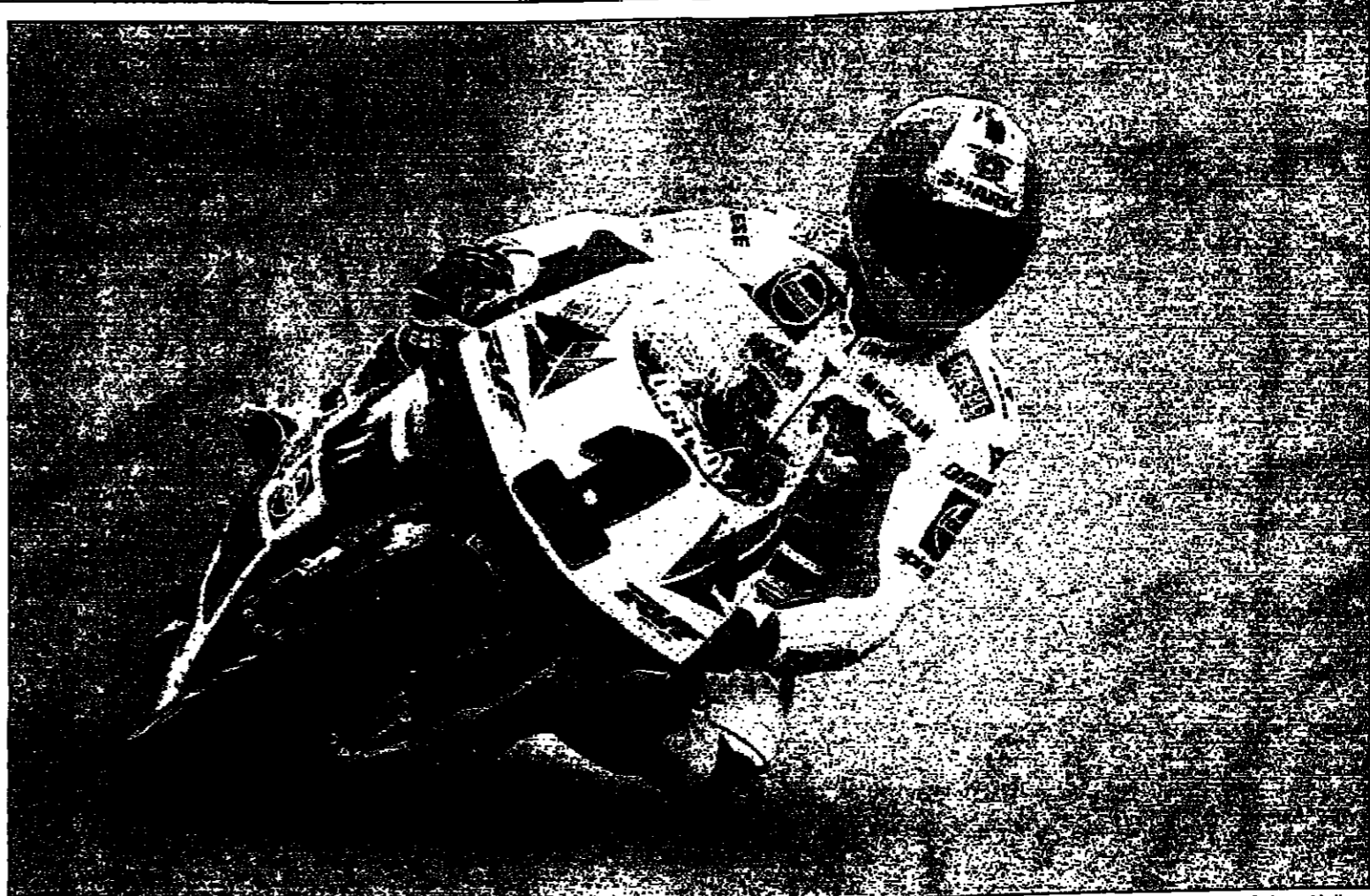
twist every bit as acute as those at the demanding Kent circuit

where a 40,000-strong crowd will cheer his every move.

Last season, on a Ducati 916, he was virtually unbeatable,

and won both races in the European round of the WSB series.

This year it will be very different on the rapid but hard-



Carl Fogarty in practice at Brands Hatch yesterday as he aims for his third successive World Superbike Championship. Photograph: Robert Hallam

Fogarty masters art of alchemy

No one could accuse Carl Fogarty of complacency. In the hunt for the winning combination

the 30-year-old Lancashire rider had found the unbeatable ingredients: himself and a Ducati

motorcycle. That formula won two successive World Superbike

Championships, and has earned Fogarty - "Foggy" to his

abundant fans - a place among Britain's motorcycle greats. He

followed that feat by doing the unexpected, switching to Honda

and a bike unsuited to his riding style. Complacency, no, but a touch perverse, perhaps.

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Andrew Martin on

tomorrow's challenge

for Carl Fogarty

at Brands Hatch

a Kawasaki and won the

endurance title. He then rode a

Yamaha at the Isle of Man TT,

clocking the outright lap

record.

"Power-wise, the Honda's

not much different to the

Ducati. It's a bit fickle on

some tracks. It just doesn't

like 'em, sort of makes its own

mind up when it gets there. It

definitely suits flat tracks with

a smooth surface. Anything

that is off camber and down

hill, you're really got to wrestle

it round. But we'll just see

what happened this weekend. I

think I can go all right. I'm

really up for it."

After a poor start to the

season - a 100mph crash at

Misano, Italy, and a poor

Donington, where sixth was his

best finish - the Honda's rear

end was heightened, and hard-

er fork springs installed. This

made the bike's front more

flexible, allowing Fogarty to feel

earlier when the front wheel

begins to lose traction while

banked at breathtaking speed.

Victories at Hockenheim, Ger-

many, and Monza, Italy, fol-

lowed. Second and third places

at Brno, the Czech Republic,

saw Fogarty begin to close on

his rivals, Troy Corser, Antho-

ny Gobert and John Kocinski.

Altering the bike, however,

has not been sufficient for

Fogarty. He, typically, has gone

to greater lengths in the search

for perfection.

"The biggest change we've

made really is me. I've had to

change the way I ride. Riding

the Ducati was all about car-

rying a lot of corner speed, and

I couldn't do that with the Honda,

which I was trying to do ear-

ly on in the season. So I

scrapped that idea. Now I ride

hard into corners and hard out

really. So I've changed my

style from four years of riding

a Ducati to riding a Honda, and

I've managed to do it and win

some races.

"It's not easy and it's not the

way I prefer to ride but it's the

only way I know how to get this

Honda round."

At third in the championship

standings, 34 points behind

Corser, Fogarty still believes he

is capable of winning a third

world title. "It's getting to the

stage now where I've really got

to think about beating the guys

in front of me in the champi-

onship. It doesn't necessarily

depend on this weekend but

certainly the round after that.

After Brands, I've got four

circuits in a row that I think I'm

going to go well on, if the bike

works good anyway. Last year

I won all four."

"I don't mind Brands, it's

one of the tracks you enjoy

when the bike is working well

and last year the bike was

working great, so I really en-

joyed it."

Practice times, Sporting

Digest, page 23

RACING RESULTS

GOODWOOD

2.35: 1. GOODWOOD (H) 10-11. 2. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 3. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 4. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 5. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 6. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 7. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 8. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 9. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 10. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 11. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 12. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 13. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 14. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 15. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 16. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 17. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 18. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 19. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 20. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 21. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 22. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 23. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 24. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 25. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 26. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 27. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 28. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 29. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 30. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 31. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 32. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 33. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 34. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 35. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 36. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 37. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 38. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 39. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 40. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 41. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 42. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 43. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 44. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 45. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 46. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 47. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 48. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 49. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 50. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 51. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 52. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 53. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 54. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 55. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 56. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 57. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 58. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 59. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 60. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 61. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 62. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 63. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 64. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 65. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 66. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 67. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 68. Goodwood (H) 10-11. 69. Goodwood (H

The bulk of the population is still largely ignorant about the stock market and unaware of the benefits to be had from putting money into shares as a long-term investment.

Is the private investor at a serious disadvantage when it comes to investing in the stock market? The conventional wisdom seems to be that he is. Discriminated against by the tax system, and starved of valuable information and opportunities by the way the City works, this holds that he has next to no chance of doing as well as the professional institutional investor. While the privatisation programme may have led to a revival in the number of private investors owning shares directly, most still have only one or two shares in their portfolios. So we are still a long way from reversing the long-term decline in wider share ownership in this country.

That, in essence, is the conventional argument on where the private shareholder stands. According to Sir Mark Weinberg, chairman of a committee set up by the Stock Exchange to examine whether the private investor is a dying breed, there is some truth in all this. But his committee's report, published last month, predictably got a poor press, with most commentators saying that he had failed to come up with enough specific recommendations to reverse the trend.

Sir Mark's real offence seems to have been that he failed to criticise strongly enough the Stock Exchange's new rule allowing companies to exclude private investors from most new issues if they so choose. It was this decision which originally prompted the setting up of the committee. In addition, he said it was largely up to the financial services industry, rather than the Government or the



JONATHAN DAVIS
INVESTMENTS

Stock Exchange, to come up with ways of tempting more private shareholders back into the fold.

Neither conclusion was guaranteed to win any plaudits from a constituency which prefers decisive-looking actions to well-meant words, and which has long marked the Stock Exchange down, not entirely without justice, as an enfeebled and not very effective organisation. Yet, in my view, Sir Mark is largely right on both counts. In fact, I would go further in saying that the outlook for private shareholding is probably brighter now than it has been for some time – partly because of new technology, and partly because of the recent changes in the financial services industry, which have introduced much more effective competition.

The impact of potentially low-cost PC-based systems for communicating information, coupled with the growing aware-

ness that financial services can be marketed successfully as consumer items like many others, should be eventually to transform the way that shares are owned and regarded in this country. What we have lacked so far is the emergence of a firm with the courage and resources to do for personal investment what Direct Line has done so successfully in insurance.

The market is certainly there, waiting to be exploited. The committee's research suggested that concern over the fate of the private investor should not be exaggerated. For example:

• Although private investors inevitably hold a much smaller proportion of the quoted stock market now than they did 50 years ago, this is largely the result of the growth in pension funds and life insurance industries over the period. But the number of individual shareholders has risen from 3 million to 9 million, largely as a result of the privatisation programme.

• Although private investors appeared to be net sellers of shares in the 1980s, the strong growth in share prices means that direct share investment still represents a larger proportion of the nation's personal liquid wealth than it did 20 years ago. (Remember also that the average pension fund has some 80 per cent of its assets in the stock market, so the proportion of the nation's total wealth now represented by shares is certainly at record levels).

• With the huge growth in the unit trust and investment trust industries over the last 30 years, investors now have a much wider range of choice over how and where

to invest their money in shares than they did before. Contrary to popular impression, the proportion of the population which holds shares directly in the UK is also about the same as it is in the United States – and still far ahead of most Continental countries.

Despite this evidence, what is not in doubt is that the bulk of the population is still largely ignorant about the stock market and unaware of the benefits to be had from putting money into shares as a long-term investment. Sixty per cent of the population still do nothing but hold all their spare cash in a building society or bank, regardless of whether it is long-term or short-term savings. This is clearly not a rational course of action when at times like the present their money is losing its value in real terms each year.

Most Britons, the research suggests, are essentially very risk-averse. The big unknown is how far this is due to a genuine horror of risk, and how far to an inadequate understanding of the nature of the risk involved in buying shares. The Weinberg committee concludes, reasonably I think, that it is as much the latter as the former. Assessing risk is not one of our strongest cards as a nation. The National Lottery and the BSE crisis have amply demonstrated as much this year.

Of course there is more that the Government could do on the tax front: abolishing capital gains tax is the obvious step towards encouraging more savings and removing one of the worst distortions. But there is also much that the City could do

to spread awareness of the different ways in which the risks of equity investment can be managed. The underlying challenge is ultimately a commercial one. People will invest more in shares, as with any other good, if they are persuaded that it is in their interests to do so.

What confuses the issue in most of the debate is the distinction between buying individual shares and buying a collective investment such as a unit trust or investment trust. For many investors, a fund managed by someone else is the best way to invest in the market. It gives them the benefit of diversification and the chance to delegate the management of their money to someone whose full-time job it is. The main problems are how to pick the right fund for their needs, and how to avoid paying too much in charges.

The issue of whether people should pick their own shares and handle their own portfolios is a quite distinct one, I share. With many professional investors, the view that there is no reason why individual investors should not produce better results than most so-called professionals. Private investors of this kind have many inherent advantages.

They do not have to pay their own management fees and overheads. They can afford to take a long-term view, and to sit out the market if they wish. And so on. But individuals are only likely to be able to profit from these advantages if they are prepared to put some time and effort into handling their investments – and not all of us are able or willing to do so.

Big Bang for two building societies

What will N&P's merger with Abbey National mean for customers? Ken Welsby reports

The busy bee has buzzed its last. As the merger of National & Provincial with Abbey National takes effect tomorrow, the building society's familiar logo will disappear from the streets.

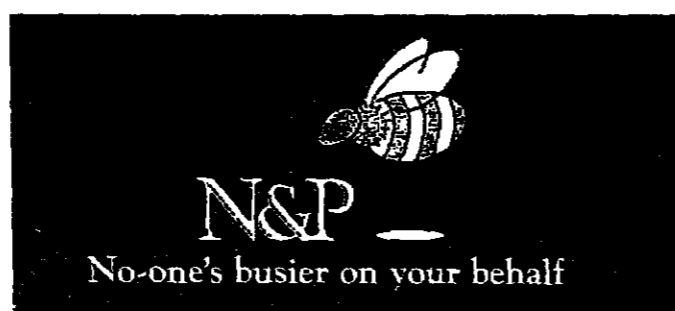
Although all N&P branches – and cash machines – are closed to customers until Monday morning, an army of more than 1,200 people is working round the clock to make the merger happen: installing new computer systems and replacing the busy bee with Abbey's familiar red umbrella.

It is the first time a "Big Bang" of this kind has been attempted. The previous big building society merger, of the Leeds and Halifax, involved an overnight change of corporate identity, but consolidation of accounts and systems has been phased over almost a year. When N&P branches closed their doors at 5pm last night, staff had two hours in which to balance their accounts before the computer network shut down. Engineers started arriving soon afterwards, installing new PCs and printers which are being linked to the Abbey network over the weekend.

Meanwhile gangs of contractors are visiting every branch to install new signs: in many cases the new name-boards are already in place, hidden by temporary N&P signs which can quickly be pulled down.

About 100 N&P and 10 Abbey branches have closed, with accounts transferring to another office nearby. No staff are being made redundant as a result of the merger, since both organisations have frozen recruitment since last year's announcement of the link-up.

The marriage, which involves the transfer of assets worth £1.3bn, has taken 55 weeks to consummate. But the climax, so far as most N&P customers are con-



Buzzing off: National & Provincial's bee will disappear

cerned, is still a few weeks away: the payout, worth at least £500 in shares or cash, does not come until the end of the month.

Some long-serving N&P staff and loyal customers are dismayed at the end of the society's independence, and the switch from membership of a mutual to being customers and shareholders of a plc. But they can find some reassurance in the fact that Abbey's roots and culture have grown from the same soil: the 19th century building society movement.

The early building societies were exactly what the name suggests: groups of local people who clubbed together to raise money for building homes of their own. N&P traces its origins back to the Bradford Third Equitable Benefit Building Society, founded in 1864, and incorporates half a dozen other societies dating back to the same period.

Abbey National was created in 1944 by the merger of the Abbey Road and National building societies. Established in 1849, the National's chief object, according to the first prospectus, was to qualify members to vote at elections, which at the time required ownership of freehold land worth 40 shillings a year.

Today about 45 per cent of

Abbey's shares are held by private investors, rather than institutions, and this proportion will increase to almost 50 per cent following the merger. The scale of this shareholding, unique among financial institutions in the UK, results from the decision taken in 1989, when Abbey converted from a building society to a bank and floated on the Stock Exchange, to offer shares to members only, and not to corporate investors.

There's comfort also to be drawn from Abbey's financial performance. At the time of conversion, members received 100 free shares, worth £130 at the time. Today those shares are worth

more than £560, and dividend payments to date have been worth another £100-plus.

Some N&P savers will benefit from better interest rates than those currently offered by the society. On Tessa accounts, for example, Abbey offers higher rates than N&P for amounts over £8,400.

Those with mortgages over £60,000 will pay a slightly lower rate: while N&P's standard variable rate was 7.04 per cent, Abbey charges 6.99 per cent for mortgages from £60,000 to £99,999 and 6.94 per cent over £100,000.

Abbey's personal loans are cheaper – a full percentage point less than the N&P rate for loans over £5,000. Visa card holders will see their monthly interest rate cut from 1.63 per cent to 1.52 per cent, or 1.38 per cent for balances over £1,000.

The other group to benefit will be N&P customers with Max or Instant Access accounts. In place of their existing ATM card they have new Electron cards which can be used as debit cards for payment in shops as well as to make withdrawals from the "hole in the wall".

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هاتوا من الأصل

sport

Selectors set to sacrifice Russell again

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE
Cricket Correspondent

After a week where English cricket past and present suffered resounding defeats at the hands of Pakistan, familiar alarm bells are beginning to sound. But if Ian Botham is considering an appeal - crying foul over his opponent's tactics in the High Court - England's selectors, in a cry for help, are once more set to repeal the specialist wicket-keeper's role and hand the gloves back to Alec Stewart for next week's Headingley Test.

Of course, both are the knee-jerk reactions of unexpected defeat: England's coming after a wicketless last morning at Lord's when a draw looked likely. Botham's on the back of an unexpected verdict from the jury. However, given time spent in sensible surroundings each ought to be scotched and neither is worth the ridicule further humiliation would bring.

And yet from the selectors' point of view, the temptation will be overwhelming. Trying to overcome an early setback in a three-Test series often requires far greater risk-taking and sacrifice, and Russell, ever the

philosophical team man, has probably already steeled himself against being dropped.

However, apart from the unfair treatment towards Russell - who scored his second Test century a month ago against India at Lord's - reverting the keeper's role to one of batting all-rounder is a futile one. In the 16 Tests where he has kept wicket, Stewart averages just 25 as opposed to 45.5 he averages when playing solely as a batsman.

As a team England have fared even less well with Stewart behind the stumps, having won just four of the 16 matches.

True, the logic of strengthening the batting against such a penetrative attack may be sound one, but once the ball starts to swing late and fast, one more middle-order batsman is not going to make a whole lot of difference.

If England really want to combat the mid-innings dangers posed by Waqar and Wasim, they must persuade the Headingley groundsmen to produce a soft well-grassed pitch with lush surroundings. Only then will the wearing process crucial to achieving reverse swing be slowed long enough for England's middle-order to play themselves in.

With Graeme Hick having surely played his last Test of the summer, and Mark Ealham batting two places too high, England need to construct a new middle-order. Few already in the side will be volunteering and should Nasser Hussain prove his fitness, even he will not be guaranteed of slotting straight back into the No 3 spot, which Alec Stewart filled so gallantly at Lord's. Instead, if fit, Hussain may be asked to bat at five, with either John Crawley or Matthew Maynard being strongly considered to bat at six. Fitness doubts also surround Chris Lewis, badly missed last

week. At Lord's, England's bowling struggled to push Pakistan on to the back foot and even if Lewis comes through unscathed, the respective cases for Darren Gough, Andy Caddick and Darren Headley are all likely to get a airing.

If they do, Simon Brown is likely to be dropped, and therefore destined to join the increasingly less elite band of England's one-cap wonders. Picked to swing the ball conventionally, which he did not do (the Reader has used tend not to swing when new), he struggled generally, bowling too many loose balls.

It is a problem that once kept Sussex's leg-spinner Ian Salisbury from having an extended run in the England side. But if he has reclaimed his place by cutting down on his profligacy, the trade-off has been to cut down on the amount of spin, a dangerous thing even if you are a spinner who can bat as Salisbury can.

There is a rumour that each of England's selectors are turning up in Leicester tonight, with their selections already written down without prior consultation. As ever, it will be interesting whose views prevail.

Another whose views prevail, possibly against Salisbury, is the Bradford Bulls' chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, who was Wigan's chairman when they signed Offiah from Widnes for a world record £440,000 in 1992, called the deal "a major turning point in the game".

Bulls ask Elliott to start 'a dynasty'

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

The Bradford Bulls have opted for continuity by promoting their assistant coach, Matthew Elliott, to replace the departing Brian Smith.

"We are in the early stages of creating a dynasty here at Bradford," said the club's chairman, Chris Caisley, "and we are keen to continue the forward momentum commenced by Brian Smith."

Elliott, aged 32, played for Easts and St George in Sydney before becoming Smith's assistant at both St George and Bradford. "It's a tremendous honour to be given the responsibility of continuing to build on the success of the last 12 months," he said.

Martin Offiah finally completed his joint move to the London Broncos and Bedford yesterday. He will make his Broncos debut against Warrington tomorrow.

A combined fee of something less than £300,000 has given the two clubs equal stakes in Offiah, who will play year-round, with what the London chairman, Barry Maranta, called "give and take" during the overlap between the seasons. Offiah has signed for three years with the Broncos and four with Bedford.

The League's chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, who was Wigan's chairman when they signed Offiah from Widnes for a world record £440,000 in 1992, called the deal "a major turning point in the game".

Wigan's disgruntled captain, Shaun Edwards, is Keighley Cougars' first choice to replace the Great Britain coach, Phil Larder, whose contract is not being renewed.

The Cougars have talked to Edwards about the possibility of him becoming player-coach at the First Division club. But the Wigan chairman, Jack Robinson, said: "He is a contracted Wigan player and we expect him to carry on playing for us."

Line leads England's challenge

Bowls

Wendy Line carries the hopes of the hosts as England hope to make home advantage tell when they host the eighth Women's World Championships that begin in Leamington Spa today.

Scotland hosted the last championships at Ayr four years ago and picked up gold medals in the triples, fours and team event in a championships notable for England's lack of success, with the best that they could muster being bronze medals in the singles, triples and fours.

The opening week of the 15-day championships is dominated by the pairs and triples, followed by the singles and fours.

Line, from Southampton, plays in the singles in the second week but begins the championships in the triples skipped by Mary Price from Burnham, Buckinghamshire, with Jean Baker from the Blackwell at second.

England open their campaign this afternoon when they take on Kenya, and face the Canadians in the evening.

The defending champions Scotland are represented by Margaret Letham (Burnbank, Hamilton), Betty Forsyth (Blantyre) and Sarah Gourlay (Anbank). They open against Guernsey and then take on the United States.

In the pairs, England's hopes rest with Gill Fitzgerald, from Kettering Lodge, and Norma Shaw, the former world singles champion from Norton. The England pair take on Jersey, the silver medalists from 1992, in their opening match and then line up against Western Samoa.

Defending pairs champions Phillis Nolan and Margaret Johnston from Ireland meet Swaziland in their opener and then continue their bid for a record third successive title when they meet Norfolk Island.

Sussex facing a troublesome task

HENRY BLOFELD

reports from Eastbourne
Yorkshire 345 & 133
Sussex 253 & 7-0

The second day at the Saffrons provided good entertainment, first for the large contingent of Yorkshire exiles who have gathered for this match and then later for the followers of Sussex, who also had plenty to enjoy.

After a century by Bill Athey, a Yorkshire exile himself,

Sussex lost their last five wickets in 13 balls, giving Yorkshire a first innings lead of 92. Six of the Sussex wickets fell to Peter Hartley for 67 runs - and this after his joyously rumpaging innings of 89 on the first day. At the age of 36, Hartley is having a wonderful season and he is one of those happily uncomplicated players who tries his heart out and so obviously enjoys everything he does.

The importance of Yorkshire's lead became increasingly apparent as they began

their second innings. Vasebert Drakes and Ed Gidkins found occasional awkward lifts while Jason Lewy continued to swing the ball back disconcertingly into the right-handers.

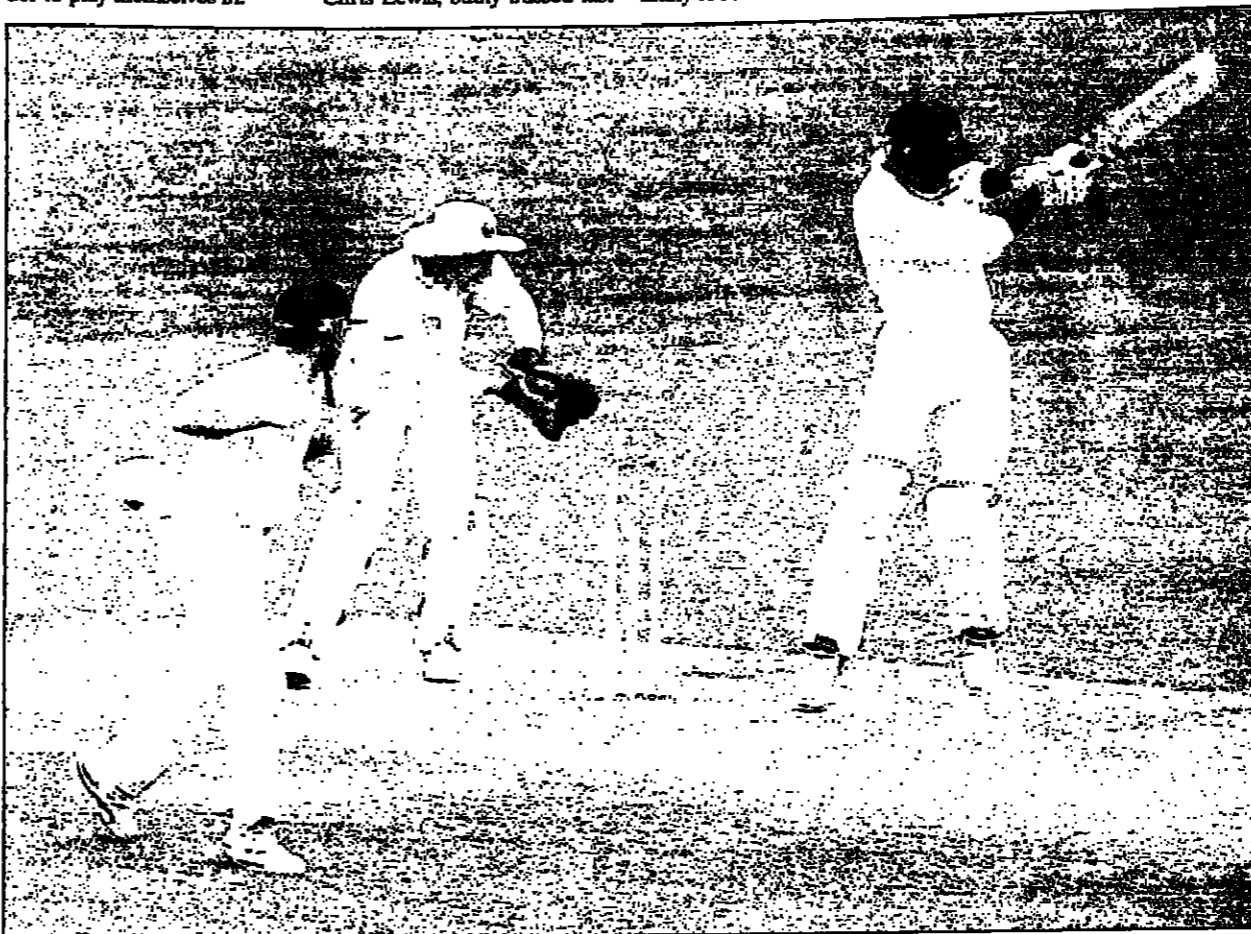
In no time at all Yorkshire were 29 for 3, and batting was suddenly more difficult than it had been. The innings now centered round a most determined half-century from their captain, David Byas, and Sussex are going to find it extremely hard work to score even as many as 219 to win.

Sussex's week at the Saffrons is a delightful occasion, especially when the sun shines, as it has done for most of the two days. In the middle of Eastbourne, with enough trees to give a country flavour and a distant glimpse of the wooded slopes of the South Downs thrown in, it is one of first-class cricket's more homely stages.

The character of county cricket badly needs these outgrounds to be saved from the general rush for centralisation. There was a crowd of 2,500, which may not sound much, but it filled the limited accommodation and, along with a good number of hospitality tents, helped produce a wonderful atmosphere.

The first part of the day centered around Athey, who in a pleasantly perverse way loves making runs against his old county. They take him longer than they used to do, but his concentration is as tight as ever and his rather studious cover drives are still timed pretty well. After some good strokes from Alan Wells at the start, he followed a wide one from Hartley and was caught behind. Neither Keith Greenfield nor Martin Speight lasted long, but at 242 for 5, when Athey turned Hartley for two to square leg for his 53rd hundred, Sussex seemed reasonably well placed.

Thirteen balls later the innings was over. Three balls after reaching his hundred, Athey played across the line in trying to turn Hartley to leg and was lbw. Then, in a rush, Peter Moores and Ian Salisbury perished in the same over from Craig White, while Hartley accounted for Danny Law and Gidkins in the next.



Chris Lewis, the Surrey batsman, on his way to 52 against South Africa 'A' at The Oval yesterday Photograph: Peter Jay

Gooch breaks new ground for Essex

ROUND-UP

Graham Gooch broke yet another record and Paul Grayson hit a career-best 140 as Essex dominated Middlesex in the County Championship at Lord's yesterday. Essex finished on 385 for 5, 121 ahead.

Gooch's typically belligerent 92, containing 13 fours and two sixes, made him Essex's all-time leading run-scorer. He surpassed the 29,434 of Keith Fletcher, now the county's cricket consultant. Nasser Hussain also continued his recovery from a cracked finger in time for next week's Test.

Steve James led a rousing Glamorgan response to Nottinghamshire's first-innings of 371 at Workop. James struck his third century of the season and became the first Glamorgan batsman to pass 1,000 first-class runs for the summer as his side reached a highly promising 231 for 2 by the close.

Curran makes impact

MICHAEL AUSTIN

reports from Leicester
Leicestershire 422
Northamptonshire 301-4

True to character, Kevin Curran met a crisis with a bold bat, making his 22nd first-class hundred to frustrate Leicestershire, the joint Championship leaders, yesterday.

At 114 for 4, Northamptonshire were sorely threatened with following on, but Curran and Tony Penberthy averted it by sharing an unbroken partnership of 187. Zimbabweans are noted for a forthright batting approach - as Leicestershire knew after Brian Davidson's past flamboyance for them. Curran took a few risks, Penberthy followed his doctrines, and Leicestershire were doomed to frustration as chances flew just out of reach, and Paul Nixon missed an easy stumping sign of turn.

Adrian Pierson induced enough to prompt Penberthy,

Moderate bowling compounded Leicestershire's difficulties. Alan Mullally, watched by the England chairman, Ray Illingworth, was wayward and witless, his first 19 overs costing 59 runs.

Three bowling changes yielded first-over wickets for Vince Wells, Matthew Brimmon and Phil Simmons - but Leicestershire missed the injured David Mills in a match of multiple absences.

Northamptonshire needed Curran's unbeaten century, with 16 runs from 149 balls, after Alan Fordham, the acting captain, and potential marriage player, was dismissed by Brimmon's arm ball. Mal Love edged a low catch to Nixon and David Capel was caught at first slip from Simmons' third delivery.

Mullally fired a few rockets at Curran late in the day but, for Leicestershire, it was damage limitation on a pitch showing signs of turn.

Adrian Pierson induced enough to prompt Penberthy,

on 49, to edge a sharp but fumbled catch to Simmons, as fortune favoured the brave in the most substantial partnership of the match.

Northamptonshire still face the prospect of batting last, hardly a happy prospect given the ground's track record this summer. In the previous game, Sussex, in search of 213 to win, lost by 58 runs, providing Leicestershire with their fourth consecutive championship victory.

Another had already looked on the way when Leicestershire headed beyond 400, courtesy of Mullally, who struck four remarkable, and consecutive boundaries of Curly Ambrose.

Wells had departed in the morning's third over, chipping a slower ball from Capel to mid-on. His innings of 204 included 30 fours and a six, from 303 balls. To win this game, Leicestershire need a swift breakthrough today to reach the soft underbelly of Northamptonshire's lower-order batting.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Britannic Assurance County Championship

Second day of four: 11.00 hrs

Derbyshire v Gloucestershire
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - First Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - First Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Second Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Second Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Third Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Third Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Fourth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Fourth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Fifth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Fifth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Sixth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Sixth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Seventh Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Seventh Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Eighth Innings
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Derbyshire - Eighth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Ninth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Ninth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Tenth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Tenth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Eleventh Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Eleventh Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Twelfth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Twelfth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Thirteenth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Thirteenth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Fourteenth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Fourteenth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Fifteenth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Fifteenth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Sixteenth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Sixteenth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Seventeenth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Seventeenth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Eighteenth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Eighteenth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Nineteenth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Nineteenth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Twentieth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Twentieth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Twenty-first Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Twenty-first Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Twenty-second Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Twenty-second Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Twenty-third Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Twenty-third Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Gloucestershire - Twenty-fourth Innings
Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs.

Derbyshire - Twenty-fourth Innings
Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs. Derbyshire: 11.00 hrs. Gloucestershire: 11.00 hrs.

Somerset v Hampshire

TAUNTON: Hampshire (first), with five first-innings wickets standing, are 279 runs behind Somerset (80).

Somerset - First Innings
Somerset: 11.00 hrs. Hampshire: 11.00 hrs. Somerset: 11.00 hrs. Hampshire: 11.00 hrs.

Hampshire - First Innings
Hampshire: 11.00 hrs. Somerset: 11.00 hrs. Hampshire: 11.00 hrs. Somerset: 11.00 hrs.

Somerset - Second Innings
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Hampshire - Second Innings
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Somerset - Third Innings
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Hampshire - Third Innings
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Somerset - Fourth Innings
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Hampshire - Fourth Innings
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Somerset - Fifth Innings
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Hampshire - Fifth Innings
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Hampshire - Sixth Innings
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Somerset - Seventh Innings
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Hampshire - Seventh Innings
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Somerset - Eighth Innings
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Hampshire - Eighth Innings
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Somerset - Ninth Innings
Somerset: 11.00 hrs. Hampshire: 11.00 hrs. Somerset: 11.00 hrs. Hampshire: 11.00 hrs.

Hampshire - Ninth Innings
Hampshire: 11.00 hrs. Somerset: 11.00 hrs. Hampshire: 11.00 hrs. Somerset: 11.00 hrs.



Christie left on sidelines by relay bungle

MIKE ROWBOTTOM
reports from Atlanta

Britain's tale of woe on the track continued yesterday when Linford Christie's Olympics ended as they had begun - in disaster.

Christie, defending his title but disqualified from the 100 metres final through two false starts, and knocked out in the second round of the 200m, saw his championship career ended by default as his colleagues dropped the baton in the opening round of the sprint relay heats.

With the men's captain saving himself for later, Darren Braithwaite and Darren Campbell dropped the baton going into the third leg.

The foul-up revived memories of the European Championships in Helsinki two years ago when Braithwaite let the baton slip on the same change, with Christie a forlorn figure waiting to run the anchor leg in search of the gold medal.

Braithwaite complained later that he felt awkward going out for a while afterwards, as people kept coming up to him to ask if he was the runner who had dropped the baton. It looks like he is in for another trying period.

Christie, 36, is adamant that this season will be his last in top-level competition. After the debacle, his colleagues were steeling themselves to apologise.

"Linford was without a medal here and we were really going out there to do our best for him," said Campbell, who has trained regularly with the British captain during the winter. "Now I have to go and face him."

The lead-off man, Tony Jarrett, said: "We practised plenty of times. But these sort of accidents happen in the relay. It would have been nice to get something for Linford."

Braithwaite, part of the squad that won a World Championship bronze in Tokyo in 1991 and the World Indoor silver medalist over 60m last year, admitted: "It sums up the whole Olympics for us."

Like Christie, Britain's 400m silver medalist Roger Black took a break from the first round of the 4x400m relay, but his team-mates reached the semi-finals safely.

In the javelin qualifying, European champion Steve Backley, who was on crutches in June after an Achilles tendon operation, needed only one throw of 84.14m to reach today's final.

But he warned: "It will be an awesome competition - no place for faint hearts or weak bodies. It will take 88 metres to get among the medals, but I

don't normally leave major championships without a medal and I don't expect to do so here." His training partner, Mick Hill squeezed through with 80.48, but Nick Nieland went out on 75.74.

Dennis Mitchell said he would be prepared to relinquish the anchor leg in the United States' 4x100m relay team if Carl Lewis was selected to run.

Lewis, who won his ninth Olympic gold medal in the long jump on Monday, has hinted heavily that he would like the opportunity to go for a record 10th, but he did not make the US squad at the Olympic trials.

He may have moved one place nearer his goal yesterday with the news that Leroy Burrell, his friend and training partner, had withdrawn from the relay squad with injury.

Burrell denied that he had acted to give Lewis an opportunity. "Would you give up a Pulitzer Prize?" he snapped. "No. That's ridiculous."

Mitchell said: "If Carl is selected to run there is only one place we would be comfortable with him running and that's anchor. I have known and worked with Carl long enough to know if he ran anchor and I ran third, his hand would be there when I came round that bend. We wouldn't have to practise."

More reports, pages 25 and 24 Results, page 25



Moment of achievement: Michael Johnson raises his arms in celebration of his 200 and 400 metres double

Photograph: David Ashdown

Johnson seen as object of wonder as he sprints into track history

Mike Rowbottom reflects on a momentous occasion at the Olympic Stadium, the like of which has rarely been seen

Like an astronaut newly returned from the first space flight, Michael Johnson was an object of wonder on Thursday night.

After a stupendous world record of 19.32sec had secured the 28-year-old Texan a place in history as the first man to win the Olympic 200 and 400 metres double, he was asked to explain the unexplainable: what did it feel like to be the fastest man in the world? He did his best.

"I knew coming off the kerb," he said. "You can always tell when you make the transition from the kerb to the straight. I felt at that point that I was running faster than I'd ever run before in my life. As far as describing what that's like... well, it's an incredible thrill."

He paused, searching for a better means of expression. "My dad bought me a go-kart when I was a kid... and did I ever make that thing go fast - down the hill, whoosh. That's the only thing I can think of that compares. So if you want to know how it feels, go get you a go-kart, find a hill..."

At which point the bronze medalist, Ato Boldon, chipped in: "That's my next training method." In the tumult that greeted Johnson's victory, Boldon, an obsessive student of sprinting history, had bowed to him with arms outstretched, as if to say: "We are not worthy."

It was a performance which left the Texan's opponents al-

most speechless. Frankie Fredericks, who had ended Johnson's unbeaten sequence of 38 races by defeating him at this distance in Oslo last month, ran the race of his life to record 19.68, just 0.02sec outside the world record Johnson had set on the same track two months earlier at the US Olympic trials.

Fredericks ended up five metres adrift, in what looked more like the finish to one of Johnson's 400m races. "I thought when he ran 19.66 it was incredible," Fredericks said. "To run 19.32... I don't know what to say."

The obvious point of comparison is with Bob Beamon, who put the long jump world record out of reach for 23 years in winning the 1968 Olympic title. Johnson's advance - ramrod-backed, with pattering steps - is just as enormous. No one has ever reduced the 200m record by such a margin. But there is one man who might better the achievement in the next few years - and that man is Michael Johnson.

You could almost see Boldon and Fredericks sinking further into their chairs either side of him as he described how his race could have been better, saying

that a stumble out of the blocks had cost him a few fractions of a second.

"I didn't use my arms like my coach was telling me to do in practice," he said. "That's what happens when you don't do what your coach tells you."

There seemed not a trace of irony in his remark. Johnson does have a wry sense of humour which is becoming increasingly obvious as he works to overcome his innate shyness. But he is a man obsessed with detail.

He is so tidy that his sister, Deirdre, once complained that his condominium in Dallas "looked like no one ever lived there". He is said to keep his passport in the P folder of an impeccably maintained filing cabinet. His kit is always meticulously laid out before races, including pre-race and post-race snacks.

It was entirely in character that he should shy away from a question asking him if he regarded himself as "The Man" on track. "That's something that's left up to the fans' opinion," he said. "I just concentrate on the things that I can control and look for specific criteria."

What Johnson has found hard to control is the stress

which his double plan has imposed upon him. The Olympic schedule was altered to ease his path. He took to the track in gold shoes. Self-imposed they may have been, but these stresses were enormous.

"Pressure," he said. "There's never been this much pressure on me in my entire life. Every day when I picked up newspapers and magazines, there was always something about this double. Every time I went out into the streets, people would mention it. 'People called me to take the pressure off,' he said, adding with a slow grin, "and that was just adding more pressure."

That's what it's been like for the last six months. I was afraid out there that maybe I wouldn't be able to get the medal. It makes you get nervous. But that's OK. I like to be nervous. I ran like I was nervous."

His reversal of fortune at the last Olympics, when his position as clear favourite for the 200m was crucially undermined by the effects of food poisoning, has served, not surprisingly, as a big motivating factor.

"Today is, for me, a big relief," he said. "It sums up what my career is all about. After winning the 400m I felt like there

was a plan for me after all the setbacks I had had. All I could do was to go out and perform to the best of my ability and leave the rest to God."

How, he was asked, had he found the strength to complete eight races successfully on a track so hard that even the sprinters were complaining about its attritional effects?

"It is partly mental strength, and partly the programme that my coach, Clyde Hart, has made up. We welcome multiple rounds. That's the way we train."

"A lot of people paid a lot of money to come out and see this, but if they saw me in practice, that's where they get their money's worth, because we are going at it."

There was one other significant statistic attached to Johnson's performance. His victory margin of 0.36sec was the biggest in the men's Olympic 200m event since 1936, when 0.4sec separated the second-placed man, Mack Robinson of the United States, from the champion - Jesse Owens.

Shortly after the US Olympic trials, Johnson received a letter from Owens's widow, Ruth, congratulating him upon his achievements on the track, and the way he conducted himself off it.

"It was the greatest honour I have ever received in my life," Johnson said. He had brought the letter along with him on every one of his six visits to the Olympic stadium. And in the end, his greatest honour was honoured.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

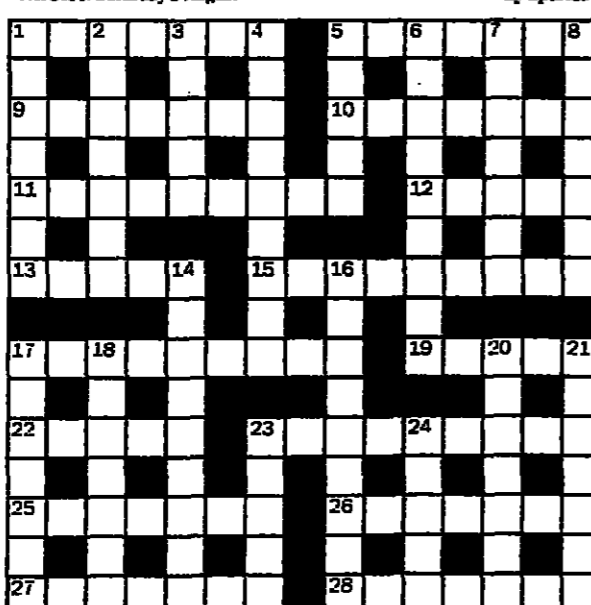
Lost for words?

Turn to the Franklin Bookman Dictionary and Thesaurus.

No. 3056, Saturday 3 August

By Sparrows

Friday's Solution



FRIDAY'S SOLUTION
DOWN
1. CUMULATIVE
2. DIPPED
3. IMPROVED
4. GUMMIES
5. FARMHOUSE
6. TENSE
7. TIT
8. SPASM
9. ISRAELITE
10. NOUN
11. INTERGERS
12. TOTAL
13. ROPE
14. DISSIDENT
15. OCEAN
16. AUSTRALIA
17. FLAME
18. STROPE
19. TYRANNY

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION
ACROSS
1. MISTAKENLY
2. BEAK
3. SPOT
4. APPROXIMATELY
5. UOL
6. NOUN
7. RETREAD
8. EXTREME
9. STOREROOM
10. SHEN
11. UOL
12. RARE
13. BUTTERFLINGER
14. TIT
15. HIGHER
16. GROSSER
17. BOW
18. UOL
19. MACHINERY
20. FINE
21. YOL
22. DUES
23. DUSINESSY

- ACROSS
- Complex character, his wife's mother (7)
 - Bed available (Stuart's off to Malta) (7)
 - No female's enthralled by hersearing - it's a bore (4-3)
 - Something of a flap, according to Biggles (7)
 - Tourist publication girl in uniform viewed with reserve (5, 4)
 - Damp one's found in the majority of housing (5)
 - Evening's when most of the drink gets knocked back (5)
 - Neglected giving notice about embargo having finished (9)
 - Trial in meadow beside river (5, 4)
 - Rope, see, by which a vessel's secured (5)

- Stout American officer's going round yard (5)
- French wine consumed (about 11111 litre) to protect against disease (9)
- Cool character important in bowls, in summer season? (7)
- Inauspicious appearance of mason, one that's upset us (7)
- Undistinguished pupil attends classes (7)
- Dreadful sameness mostly observed in a group (2, 5)

- DOWN
- Figure given a month previously, first item of news (7)
 - Elaborate ring had offers sweetheart (7)
 - Call about Japanese drama recording having turned up (5)
 - Affect us badly, necessitating intake of oxygen? (9)

THE FRANKLIN SCRAMBLE Make the longest word you can from DISCOUSS. Yesterday's Scramble: BLOOMING

Win a Franklin Bookman Dictionary and Thesaurus worth £100

The first correct solution to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday win a Franklin Bookman Dictionary and Thesaurus worth £100. Answers and the winner's name will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winner was B W Tilling, Dunstable.

A SOUVENIR



The MALT



The MACALLAN

TAKES ITS PLACE AT THE TOP OF THE WINNER'S PODIUM, THE RESULT OF MANY A TASTE-TEST SUCCESS, SO IF YOU'RE IN SEARCH OF A PERSONAL BEST LOOK NO FURTHER THAN The MACALLAN